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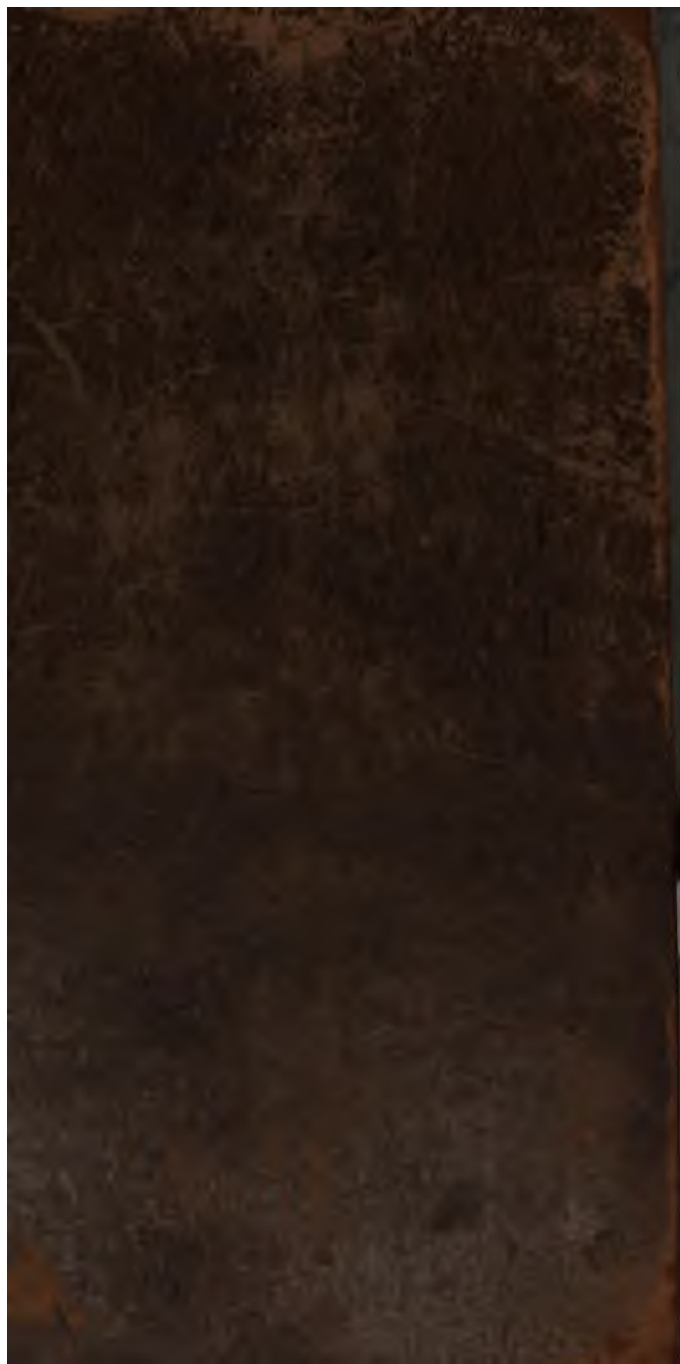
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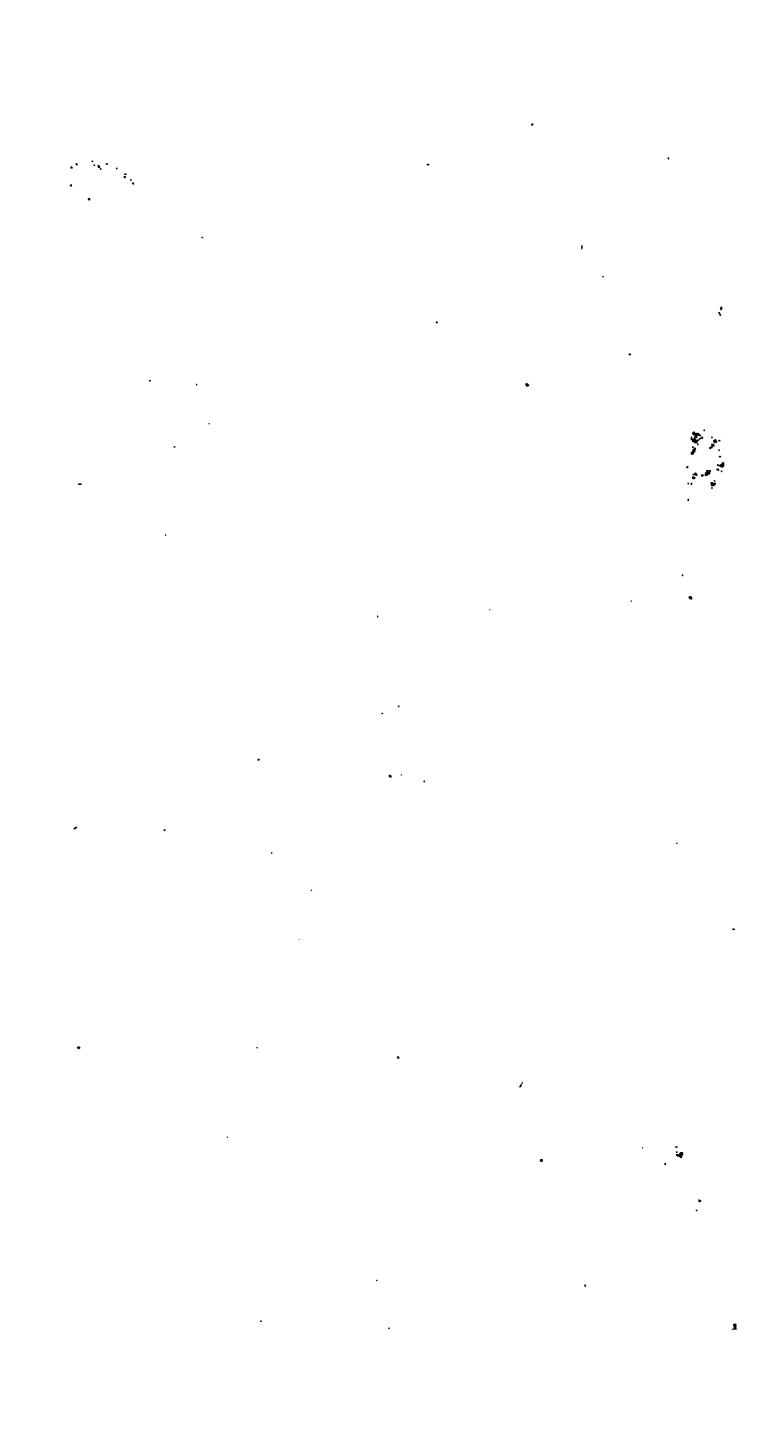




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ETHELINDE,

OR THE

RECLUSE OF THE LAKE.

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ETHELINDE,
OR THE
RECLUSE OF THE LAKE.

BY
CHARLOTTE SMITH:

IN FIVE VOLUMES.



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ETHELINDE,

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CHAPTER I.

SIR Edward Newenden and Montgomery journeyed rapidly towards London, but neither of them were inclined to conversation, and as they approached the town their mutual uneasiness and anxiety seemed to encrease: Sir Edward remembered the strange situation in which he had left his family; his wife absent, mourning over the effects of that vengeance which he

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had

had been compelled to take on Lord-Danesforte, his children without their mother, his own actions perhaps misrepresented; while his conscience, unaccustomed hitherto to allow him any great latitude, represented to him in forcible colours the error he had committed in yielding to the first impulse of ungovernable affection, and hastening at such a time to Ethelinde. The reproaches he made himself on this head served however to strengthen the resolution he had made, not to conquer his passion for her, for that he felt to be out of his power, but to preclude the possibility of its doing her farther injury, by quitting the only satisfaction he ever promised himself, that of seeing her and loving her in silence, reserving only the right of a guardian to serve and befriend her by the interposition of others.

Montgomery, whose heart was agitated between faint hopes and tormenting apprehensions, was eager to get to his lodgings, where he expected to find letters from
his

his mother, on the contents of which his fate depended. He leaped out of the chaise, therefore, the moment it stopped in Hanover Square; and hardly staying to take leave of his fellow traveller, he hurried to his lodgings in Portland Street, whither he had desired his letters to be directed.

Sir Edward, on entering his own house, learned of his servants that their lady had returned to it that morning, that her mother was with her, and that physicians had been sent for to attend her, as she was extremely ill. Numberless uneasy and distressing reflections now crowded on the mind of Sir Edward. He knew not how to refuse receiving his wife, for nothing on her part had occurred since their last meeting to make him wholly decline it: yet the contemptuous and disgraceful conversation repeated to him by Templeton; the speech Lord Danesforte had himself made on receiving his wound; her violent concern, and the general style of her con-

duct since their reconciliation; all contributed to impress more deeply on his mind the suspicions before too strong of her misconduct. He had not time long to consider how he should act, before Mrs. Maltravers, hearing he was returned, sent to desire to speak with him; and though he foresaw how disagreeable the interview would be, he could not refuse to admit her.

Her conversation, mingled with tears, lamentations, and reproaches, tended to persuade him that he had cruelly injured Lady Newenden, and most unjustly gratified, on Lord Danesforte, vengeance which he ought not to have conceived. She represented her daughter's situation as very dangerous; and as being occasioned solely by her fears for her husband and for her own reputation.—“And yet,” cried she, “you could be so hard hearted, so unfeeling as to leave her, and go out of town. Oh! Sir Edward, who would have thought that you could use Maria so cruelly. I assure

assure you she feels it, though, poor soul, she is not surpris'd at it; if she had been dying, to be sure you must have gone to Brackwood on *such a pressing occasion.*"

Sir Edward, vexed and confus'd to understand that the reason of his journey was known, was yet too ingenuous and spirited to deny it.—“Madam,” answered he, with as much calmness as he could assume, “you will, I hope, allow me to be master of my own actions. Be assur'd that any such reflections as you have now thrown out are so far from being likely to produce the effect you seem to expect from them, that they can serve only to convince me of the badness of that cause which can be defended only by the despicable devices of malignity and falsehood: Let Lady Newenden convince me she has never forfeited her right to my exclusive affection; having done that, which, however open to conviction I am, she will, I fear, find very difficult, let her continue, by a very different conduct from what she

has lately assumed, to shew me that I have misunderstood her, and she will never find that my affection for her cousin is of a nature to give her any cause of complaint. To a candid, a generous, a liberal mind, it must ever have appeared what it really is; but I am sorry to say that your daughter possesses little of those qualities. I hope, however, that she judges not of my conduct, of my attachments, by her own; and in doing justice to her principles and passions, supposes her cousin equally culpable.”

The calm severity of this retort seemed to be particularly cutting to Mrs. Maltravers; whose subsequent harangue on the virtues, beauty, and fortune of her daughter, and on her own consequence and perfections, was very loud and very long. Sir Edward, seeing it was not likely soon to conclude, was leaving her in possession of his apartment, when Maltravers himself entered the house, and having peevishly ordered his wife to leave them together,
he

he with more coolness entered into conversation with Sir Edward; and after discussing many points with more candour than he expected with him, (candour which originated in the dread he had lest his daughter's conduct should ill bear the investigation with which it was threatened if an absolute separation should happen) he agreed to enforce with all his power the plan which Sir Edward proposed—of immediately going with Lady Newenden and his family to Paris, and from thence to Italy, to remain at least a twelvemonth. Their going abroad together immediately after the duel would at least put an end to the report of its being occasioned solely by her Ladyship's attachment to Lord Danesforte; the reflections made on Sir Edward's partiality to Ethelinde would be forgotten; and Maltravers saw so many advantages in it, that he warmly encouraged the proposal. It was only his authority that had compelled Lady Newenden to return to the house of her husband

a second time, though he carefully concealed that circumstance from Sir Edward; and he now, in pursuance of this arrangement between them, so effectually urged the necessity of immediate compliance, that Lady Newenden, who was in a few days tired of the farce of affecting to be sick when she was really in perfect health, dismissed her Physicians; and no impediment remaining, the whole family, with Mr. and Mrs. Maltravers, set out for Dover in about a week after Sir Edward's visit to Brackwood, and proceeded directly to Paris. Lady Newenden, tho' she behaved with haughty and fullen coldness towards Sir Edward, yet seemed to have forgotten the violent friendship she had professed for Lord Danesforte, who was before their departure out of all danger, and gone to his Gloucestershire house. Neither Mrs. Maltravers or her daughter now ever named him, though he used to be the eternal theme of the former; and Sir Edward, though very miserable, endeavoured

deavoured in change of scene to find amusement, and in the tender careffes of his children consolation. The image of Ethelinde, however, purfued him every where; and hardly confcious of his motive, he lingered at Paris longer than he originally intended, becaufe he there hoped to hear of her more quickly and more frequently than it was poffible for him to do when he removed to a greater diftance from England.

Montgomery, on arriving at his lodgings, found only one letter from his mother, which informed him merely of her arrival at Lyons, and that from the complicated nature of the engagements of that houfe to which her money had been lent, ſhe had not yet been enabled to get information whether her money would or would not be fafe. Montgomery thought the whole letter written in deſpondence which ſhe ſeemed anxious to conceal; and the ſuſpenſe in which it left him redoubled his wretchedneſs. Roſton, having left two

or three messages at his lodgings during the last week of his absence, now called upon him to let him know that his appointment was made out; and that the vessel on which it was necessary for him to embark lay ready to sail, her departure from the river being absolutely fixed to happen in about ten days. Thus circumstanced, it became necessary for him to determine either to stay or go; and the contending passions with which he was agitated grew almost too painful to be endured without the deprivation of reason.

Sometimes he thought himself resolutely fixed to undertake a voyage which his courage, his honor, his reason, equally forbade his relinquishing; then the image of Ethelinde, in all its seducing charms, presented itself to him; he figured to himself all the happiness of living with her and his mother at Grasmere, and the enchanting picture of such society, their perfect confidence, their tender friendship, and their unbounded love for him: and he
forgot

forgot for a moment that he had not the means of affording to these two beings, so tenderly beloved, the necessaries of life.

In the mean time, Royston, who was very proud of the service he had done him, and who had been complimented on the merit of his young relation by all those to whom he had presented him, bustled about in his service with a zeal for which Montgomery knew not how to account. He himself delayed from day to day to make the last preparations, still willing to hope that he might not be compelled to quit the country which contained all that gave value to his existence.

A week passed thus; and at the end of that time Sir Edward took leave of him before his departure for the Continent. Sir Edward spoke but little to Montgomery of his voyage to India; but seemed to consider it as fixed; and of Ethelinde he only said that he had taken measures to have her supplied quarterly with the money he had named, and that he hoped she would pass
her

her time between the house of his sister and that of Mrs. Montgomery. At parting, however, he wrung the hand of Montgomery, and said with a deep sigh—"Farewell, dear Charles! your voyage, however long, your absence, however tedious, will, I doubt not, be fortunate. In me your situation excites envy; for if there is any thing more delightful than living with the object of our affection, it is living for them in the hope of being one day united, and in the consciousness of doing that which may promote that union. All these flattering prospects are your's. See them in their true colours, and you will be comparatively happy."

Montgomery could not reply; and tho' he felt the force of Sir Edward's observation, he could no where find any sensation in his own breast at all allied to happiness. He was glad, however, that Sir Edward Newenden was not to be in the same country with Ethelinde; and while hardly daring to own to himself the uneasy jealousy

lously he sometimes felt, he could never prevail upon himself to reflect, without uneasiness, on the friendship which Ethelinde so openly avowed for Sir Edward Newenden, or on that tender affection he had acknowledged himself sensible of for her.

While Montgomery remained in this torturing suspense, still eagerly clinging to an hope which grew every hour more feeble, Ethelinde passed the greatest part of her time alone; for Miss Newenden, as the hunting season grew near its close, pursued that amusement with increased avidity. Ethelinde, however, far from finding this solitude tedious, was extremely glad to be so little under the necessity of conversing; and as her thoughts dwelt on Montgomery, it was pleasant to have so little occasion to affect an interest for others. Miss Newenden, though still very civil to her, appeared more than usually occupied in affairs of her own; and Ethelinde observed that she often received and answered

swered letters, a circumstance hitherto unusual with her; but this might in so many other ways be accounted for, that Ethelinda was far from suspecting they came from a favoured lover.

Sir Edward Newenden, however, being now in France, his sister, though determined to reject any advice he might give, was yet unwilling to hear it, and therefore prepared to execute her matrimonial project before her design could reach his ears. Some days, however, wore away; on the part of Miss Newenden in a sort of bustle which seemed to portend some change in the family; and in that of Ethelinda in deeply participating all the melancholy anxiety so forcibly expressed in the letters she received from Montgomery. Every post day this distress was renewed and encreased; and the terms in which he described the sufferings inflicted by this painful uncertainty were faithful pictures of her own anguish and regret. At length a heavy packet was delivered to her:

with

with an unusual foreboding of evil, with trembling hands, and a beating heart, she opened it, and read thus.

London, March 11, 17—.

“ Before you read a letter, which I write in a state of mind not to be described, peruse that which I enclose to you from my mother.”

Ethelinde, hardly knowing what she did, unfolded the second letter, which ran thus.

Lyons, Feb. 28, 17—.

“ My dear Charles,

“ Not doubting but that this will find you still in London, it would have been most gratifying to me to have given you a pleasing account of our business. Judge, my son, of what I suffer in being compelled to inform you, that, having at length been present at the investigation of the affairs of Messrs Du Chesne, I find that
above:

above a thousand pounds are absolutely lost, and the remaining six hundred there is so little probability of recovering that I cannot but consider it as gone also. Mr. Le-Moine, however, advises a process to be commenced, to which I have reluctantly consented; not only because it appears to me that the expence attending the suit will be entirely thrown away, but because I must of necessity await the issue of it here, instead of returning to England. Alas! my dear Charles, my wishes to hasten thither have now no longer that motive which has ever since your birth influenced all my inclination. In returning to my country I shall not embrace him who alone has the power to make that or any other part of the globe pleasant to me; but deprived as I must be of this first delight of my life, I had formed in my imagination another, and pleased myself with the fond hope of receiving there your other self—the lovely, amiable, interesting Ethelinde. Collecting at Grasmere all you
loved:

loved: having in her a being to whom I could continually speak of my son, and to whose heart he is as precious as to mine; I thought I should less severely feel the cruel deprivation to which I must submit; and in contemplating the perfections of her who will, I still trust, crown your future days with happiness, I believed that those which were passing in this dreaded but necessary absence, would be rendered less insupportable.

“ Weeks and months must now elapse before I shall press to my anxious heart the darling of your’s. They will, however heavily, be passed, and the moment it is possible I will hasten back to her. Tell her then, my son, to preserve her health, as she would wish to make me, when we *do* meet, as easy as in your absence I can be; tell her that she is accountable to me for the felicity of my dear Charles, and that I am sure she will enable me to discharge successfully a trust so dear and welcome to me.

“ For

“ For yourself I have little to say, since I commit your safety to that Providence which preserved you amid many perils to be the blessing and consolation of your mother, while you were yet so young that she knew not how invaluable the blessing was: and I have surely nothing to add on the subject of advice; I need not recommend any virtue to him who so eminently possesses them all, whose steady religion, and unfulled conscience gives him fortitude, whose noble and undaunted spirit is inherited from a long line of ancestors, to whose illustrious name he lends new glory, and whose heart has all the tenderness of a woman blended with the firmness of an hero.

“ Write to me, dear Charles, by every possible conveyance, and imitate not the weakness I feel, while doing what on your account I know to be right, in thus consenting to and promoting your voyage. Ah! nothing but that conviction could make me submit to the anguish I now
suffer.

suffer. I would, I ought to conceal it, but the blotted paper betrays what passes in my heart while my hand is employed in bidding you, my beloved Charles, adieu! May heaven preserve and restore you to the ardent prayers of your affectionate mother,

CAROLINE MONTGOMERY."

With difficulty Ethelinde finished this letter; and before she could attempt to read that of Montgomery, she sat down and gave way to a violent passion of tears. "It is all over then," said she; "every hope is gone; yet what did I expect? all that this fatal letter tells me, I had before every reason to believe would happen?" Thus arguing with herself, she at length acquired courage to go on with Montgomery's letter.

"Having read what I have received from the best of parents and of women, you see, my Ethelinde, that your unhappy
lover

lover is destined to be exiled from you and from her. The lingering hope I had nourished in my heart is gone for ever.—I submit—I cannot bear to think of my mother's situation; for her sake, as well as in the hope of becoming as much more worthy of you as pecuniary advantages can make me, I must go! Ah! what did I not before owe that dear parent; and what an infinite increase of obligation I feel, in the tender sollicitude she expresses, for that beautiful being so dear to this agonized heart. If ever I return—if I return and find you both such as my anxious fondness will incessantly represent you, what boundless happiness will be mine; but if—Ethelinde! I cannot finish the sentence! Oh! thou beloved possessor of the very soul of Montgomery! remember that he acquires courage to doom himself to certain present misery, only in the hope of being one day happy; and that his happiness, his very existence depend on you. Let my mother's letter speak more coherently

tently than I can do of what we both expect of you. Ah! do not—do not disappoint us. I cannot write. Why indeed should I betray my own weakness while I recommend fortitude to you? I am beset by people who congratulate me on my appointment, and display the advantages that await me. Ah! they would find reason rather to condole with and pity me, could they see the tortures of my soul. How much I envy the lowest mechanic who bows to me for orders, and how ardently I wish it were possible for me to become the last retainer of my noble house amid the rude mountains of the North if I could live with those I love!

“ But all this is the mere garrulity of helpless despair, in which I ought not to indulge myself. I will repress then these fruitless murmurs to which even your tender spirit rises superior. Pardon me if I have already said too much—ah! pardon the wild effusions of a heart bursting with anguish, of a spirit at war with itself. Two days

CHAPTER II.

ETHELINDE now found a new employment, full of melancholy anxiety, in viewing the distant ocean from her favorite eminence, and fancying every vessel which appeared but as a spot in the grey horizon might possibly bear Montgomery within it. However content she had hitherto been to find herself alone, she now wished for somebody who could tell her which of the ships she saw passing were East-India men. She watched the weather; and made enquiries which nobody heeded; for the people around her were no otherwise solicitous about the wind than as the various points from which it blew produced a cold scenting morning, or was favourable to their pursuit. Ethelinde, therefore, still indulging her mournful contemplations, wandered about all day on the hills, wishing
ing

ing for intelligence, yet unable to obtain it. The letter promised from the Downs came not; yet five or six days had passed. She knew not all the various delays which occur before a ship actually leaves the river: and she fancied that Montgomery had already quitted the Coast of England.

Still she found a gloomy satisfaction in surveying the sea on which he was embarked; and this she continued to enjoy without interruption. Miss Newenden seldom enquired how she passed her time, and they met only at dinner and supper. It was at the end of about ten days, that Ethelinde, on entering the eating room, found the table set out with an unusual air of preparation: five plates were placed on it: Miss Newenden seemed extremely reserved and extremely restless; and went so frequently to the window, that Ethelinde at last ventured to enquire whether she expected company?

She answered yes; but gave her no farther information. In a few moments,

however, her suspense was at an end: Woolaston, and a young man with him, who appeared to be a clergyman, appeared in a new phaeton and four, and Davenant followed in his with six. Ethelinde, with some surprise, and more uneasiness, beheld this arrival. She had been present so little during the last visit that she had no idea of the footing Woolaston was upon; but it now needed little explanation. He was evidently expected; he was as evidently welcome; and though the event of the next day was not openly mentioned that evening, so little pains were taken to conceal it, that Ethelinde felt hardly any astonishment when at nine o'clock the next morning Miss Newenden's maid, who sometimes assisted in her room, came in and told her, with the air of a person who is in possession of an important secret, that her lady was then actually gone to church to be married to Mr. Woolaston.

Ethelinde went down as usual to the breakfast parlour; where in a few moments
the

the party came in from the ceremony, and Woolaston introduced his wife to Ethelinde in form. Mrs. Woolaston made no apology for the mystery she had observed, as seeming to think herself accountable to nobody; and her change of situation seemed to make no alteration either in her behaviour or the style of the house, except only that Mr. Woolaston became at once its acknowledged master. Two or three days after the marriage, Mr. Borlace, the young clergyman who had married them, departed, and a *parté quarrè* remained of Mr. and Mrs. Woolaston, Davenant, and Ethelinde.

Ever since she had declined the addresses of Davenant, he had affected to consider himself as affronted, and to look upon her as a silly ignorant girl who was blind to her interest, and not worth his farther attention. Ethelinde, who had always beheld him with a mixture of contempt and aversion, hoped and believed that this coldness on his part would conti-

que; and by avoiding him as much as possible, she endeavoured to convince him that the change in her own situation had made none in her opinion of him. Unhappily, however, for the peace of the deserted Ethelinde, Davenant was now induced by variety of motives to pursue her with less honourable views than those he once entertained. Her beauty he had always admired: but never so much as since he had heard Woolaston praise it: his mean and ungenerous spirit found a malignant and unworthy gratification in believing that, subdued as she now was, he could obtain as a mistress her who had refused to become his wife; and that he should finally triumph in bearing her away on his own terms from him whom he had always so inveterately hated—the handsome, gallant, favoured Montgomery. Sir Edward Newenden, in acquitting himself of his trust as his guardian, had given him some advice on his future conduct, which Davenant, so far from being grateful for, remembered

membered with sullen anger. Obstinacy, generally the companion of ignorance, would never suffer him to own himself in the wrong; and though he knew that he had, in consequence of not attending to Sir Edward's admonitions, sunk above thirty thousand pounds of his fortune, he rather disliked him for having foreseen than owned any obligation to him for having tried to prevent it. He reflected, therefore, with satisfaction on the mortification which the marriage of Miss Newenden would occasion to Sir Edward, and would have found double pleasure in succeeding with Ethelinde, from the certainty that it would be to him a still more cruel blow.

The sullen resentment, and insolent contempt which he had shewn towards Ethelinde, it was difficult to quit. By degrees, however, he pretended attention and tenderness; but so ill was his temper and manners calculated to play the lover that his attention appeared to her troublesome officiousness, and his tenderness im-

pertinence, which only served to drive her from him with disgust and even terror. Having once, however, engaged in the attempt to subdue, what he could not but perceive, her coldness and dislike, he resolved, with all the hard and immovable obstinacy and pride of his character, that she should not escape him; and he had in the worthless and unprincipled Woolaston an assistant, who, with all the inclination, had now all the power to promote his ungenerous designs.

The hunting season was almost at an end, and Mrs. Woolaston went out less frequently than during the winter. Whenever she did go, however, her husband only went with her; and Davenant found some pretence or other to remain in the house, where he had often the pleasure of passing the morning alone; for Ethelinde, who found that he pursued her every where else, usually took refuge in her own room, and locked the door.

As even her native complaisance had
never

never been able to conceal the disgust with which Davenant always inspired her in the former part of their acquaintance, she now attempted not by any effort of civility to obliterate that impression, but whenever Woolaston left them alone, which he took perpetual opportunities of doing, she seized the first moment in her power to quit the room also. It happened that about a week after Mrs. Woolaston's marriage, she was herself giving some orders in her stables; and Woolaston, in pursuance of his promise to his friend, affected to recollect something about one of the horses, and starting from his seat he ran away after her to the stables. The circumstance of her being left with Davenant had now happened so often that it was impossible to believe it accidental. Ethelinde, however, determined it should be fruitless; and eager to go for her morning walk, for in consequence of having seen in the ship news of a paper, which she now anxiously perused, that the East India ship on board

which Montgomery was, had three days before passed by Deal, and proceeded with a fair wind, she fancied that as the wind still continued in the same quarter, she might now see it; and however remote, however imaginary this melancholy pleasure might be, she still found a delight in indulging it, with which she could not bear that Davenant should interfere. Woolaston therefore had no sooner left the room, than she rose from the table, round which they had been sitting, and was opening the door, when Davenant, who had not had time to arrange the speech he meditated to detain her, rose hastily, and as with one hand she opened the door, he seized the other.

“ Pray now,” cried he, as if he had a right to be heard, “ what occasion is there for all this hurry.”

Ethelinde, struggling to get her hand from him, answered in visible displeasure—
“ I am going out, Mr. Davenant.”

“ Going

“ Going out are you? Oh! then I’ll go with you, I want a walk.”

This was even more disagreeable than remaining in the house with him; and Ethelinde was now compelled to say in some confusion that she should not walk, but was going to her room to write letters.

“ What is the use of writing letters?” cried he, seizing the other hand, and drawing her towards a chair. “ ’Tis of no use to write them to-day, for I can tell you Woolaston does not send to the post. So come and sit down—I want to ask you about Sir Edward.” Ethelinde now thought that it was better to sit a few moments with him than to let him suppose she feared him; she therefore sat down; but said impatiently—“ I beg you will not detain me long, as I really have letters to write.”

“ Pooh, pooh;” cried he, contemptuously, “ we all know who you write to; but ’twill be time enough if the dear creature receives your packet in a fortnight after he gets to Bengal. Let the poor fellow

fail in peace after his Nabobship, and do you think now a little of your old friends. I dare say by the time he gets to the end of his voyage that he'll be thinking like Ince how to make the most of himself and of his pretty person, unless he happens to pick up a Yarico by the way. Nay don't sigh so; but if he *should* happen, as he's so very handsome, you know, to bring home some governor's widow, or the yellow daughter of some rich factor—I dare say your affection for him is so perfect that you'd rejoice in his good fortune."

Ethelinde, who was at first disposed to cry, now felt her indignation conquer her vexation.—“ Mr. Davenant,” said she, “ your talents for ridicule are so very slender that really your attempts excite only pity. If you mean by what you have said to speak of Montgomery with contempt, know that it recoils on yourself, and that notwithstanding the advantage which you suppose your fortune gives you over him, he, in my idea, possesses in regard to you
all

all the superiority which every natural and acquired perfection of mind and person can give a man over him who has no obligations but to that capricious chance which bestowed on him money he does not deserve, and which he knows not how to use."

A blush of rage and shame now rose on the dull countenance of Davenant. He tried, but ineffectually, to force a smile; and hesitated to consider what he should say that should not betray how severely he was hurt, while it expressed yet more bitter contempt against this fondly preferred rival, of whom he could not think with patience; but Ethelinde, who had repented the patience she had shewn in listening to him a moment, had already left the room.

She hastened trembling to her own, where a flood of tears relieved her.—“Oh! Montgomery,” exclaimed she, “where art thou? Why is not thy generous, thy gallant spirit, sensible of the insults, of the miseries to which thy desolate Ethelinde is exposed?”

exposed? Even the last poor and mournful gratification that remained is denied me—even now perhaps the ship on whose prosperous voyage more than my existence depends, is hovering on this coast. Those eyes, where every passion is so forcibly expressed, are turned with fond and fruitless regret towards the hills of Dorsetshire, and vainly, very vainly search for some trace of that poor, forlorn, deserted being, whom thou canst no longer protect.” This stroke of self pity quite overwhelmed her; she remained for a moment in an agony of grief, while the cruel sense of what had passed within the last eight months pressed on her recollection—her father!—her brother!—her lover!—all, all taken from her. The first certainly gone for ever; the other two never perhaps to return. She felt as if deprived of every thing valuable in life; it required an effort of resolution to determine to live; and her heart seemed so oppressed that she fancied she should be suffocated if she did not immediately

mediately go into the air. The fear of meeting Davenant however was not conquered by this paroxysm of sorrow. She stepped out therefore on the stair case to listen if he was still walking in the parlour, and after standing there a moment breathless, she was relieved by hearing Woolaston enter, and propose to him to ride to the market town on some commissions Mrs. Woolaston wanted to have executed that morning; she found he consented, and soon afterwards seeing them on horseback together, she hurried on her things and fled to her seat under her beloved old thorn.

There she felt the violent oppression abate; she breathed more freely; she gazed on the extensive view; where the faint verdure, hardly perceivable, was yet enough to mark the approach of Spring. Above her head—

“ The vault was blue,
“ Without a cloud.—————”

And before her the sea appeared so clear
that

that she fancied she could distinguish the gentle undulation of the waves. Numberless small vessels were scattered on its calm surface; the white sails of some caught the full rays of the sun, others were in shadow, and appeared like dusky specks hanging in the air. No human being appeared on the whole extent of the open country between her and the sea. Scarce a cottage or a haystack arose as a sign that it was inhabited; and Ethelinde sat in a mournful yet not unpleasing reverie, till she almost fancied herself alone on a desert coast, watching for the vessel on which all her hopes of liberty and life depended. Her real situation was indeed hardly less forlorn. Young, beautiful, indigent, and friendless, the world was to her only as a vast wilderness, where perils of many kinds awaited her; and England contained not now one being solicitous for her happiness, not one friend to whom she could appeal for pity and protection.

As these melancholy reflections passed
through

through her mind, she felt almost disposed to repent that she had, by refusing all his proposals, compelled Montgomery to leave her.—“ If his voyage should be successful! if he should perish in it, how bitter will be the reproaches I shall make myself, if indeed remorse, insupportable remorse robs me not of all recollection. Yet why should I indulge such gloomy apprehensions? Why doubt that Providence to which his mother, whose tenderness for him is not less than mine, with confident hope resigns him. I have done what she thought, what I myself felt to be my duty; and shall I doubt the justice of heaven in rewarding a sacrifice so exquisitely painful, that only the great judge of hearts knows how much it cost me.” In reflections like these some hours past away; and in this appeal to heaven her mind had acquired composure, which was assisted by the tranquillity of every thing around her. No sounds but the wind sighing through the leafless hawthorn under which she sat,

or

or the whistling of the Stone Curlew, the wild and solitary inhabitant of open countries, broke the silence of perfect seclusion. Suddenly however from the dip of an hill which concealed part of the road from Brackwood to the neighbouring town, an horseman appeared riding furiously towards her; and she had hardly time to regret the interruption, and to endeavour by flight to escape it, before her uneasiness and alarm were encreased by perceiving it was Davenant.

He galloped towards her with a degree of velocity that made her step back from the approach of his horse, whose side was bathed in blood by the spurs of his savage master, who, as he yet came closer to her, shewed her a large packet he held in his hand. "I have it," cried he in a voice that left Ethelinde in yet greater consternation; "I have this letter, so long, so anxiously expected. Your itinerant lover has at least found a messenger for his dispatches who spares not speed; but"—and
he

he added an horrid oath—"I must be paid for my trouble before I deliver my billet doux."

He now leaped from his horse; and holding the letter from her with one hand, he threw the other arm rudely round her. She started from him in terror and amazement, for she now perceived by his inflamed eyes and flushed cheeks, that tho' he had not yet dined he had been drinking.

"What do you mean, Mr. Davenant?" cried she, hastening from him with trembling feet towards the house; "leave me this moment: and if the letter is mine give it me."

"Not so fast, Miss Chesterville—not so fast, if you please; you have escaped me once to day; here it is not so easy. I ask however only a little civility. Surely a dear sweet letter from the dear creature *who has every advantage over me but in that fortune which I do not deserve*, is worth a kiss."

Hurried and alarmed as Ethelinde was,

it occurred not to her immediately that he had taken up this letter at the post house. The idea of his having seen Montgomery was raised by the expression he had used of—"your itinerant lover;" yet she remembered instantly that it was impossible; but before she could conquer the confused and uneasy sensation it created, Davenant had again rudely seized her, and again demanded his reward before he delivered the letter.

Collecting, however, all her presence of mind, she said resolutely—"Your bringing it, Sir, was quite undesired, and I am far from considering myself obliged to you. As a man of honour, as a gentleman, you will certainly not be guilty of so unworthy an action as detaining a letter addressed to another."

While she said this, she still, trying to disengage herself, walked on towards the house; but Davenant, in whom profligate and unprincipled society had quite conquered the natural diffidence of his character,

racter, was now not easily repulsed; and all the odious and malignant passions of his heart were depicted on his countenance, while with an horrid oath, and something between a grin and a smile, he swore thro' his shut teeth that he would compell what he asked, and if obliged to do so she should never have her letter at all.

Ethelinde, though extremely terrified, had courage enough to determine that she would not purchase the letter of Montgomery by a concession which he would never endure that she should make; yet afraid of giving her persecutor a pretence for greater impertinence and brutality, she answered as calmly as she could.—“ Well, Sir, carry the letter home then. It will be soon enough for me to receive it when we get there. It is time to return, or our friends will wait dinner.”

“ Look ye, Miss Chesterville,” cried Davenant, whose intoxication now became more frightfully evident—“ I have once in my life been fool enough to offer to marry
you;

you; you'll never catch me at that again; but I'll do a more sensible thing; for d—me if I don't fettle six hundred a year upon you; and I think that's a devilish handsome price for a girl that has not a sixpenny piece in the world, and a little crack in her character with that story of Sir Edward. Come, come, don't affect all these violent airs; but remember 'tis not an offer you'll have every day. 'Tis not every body has the spirit or the cash to make it."

The fears of Ethelinde were now conquered by anger, contempt, and detestation.—“ This is an insult, Sir,” said she, “ which even your present condition cannot excuse. As I consider myself, while in his house, as under the protection of Mr. Woolaston, I shall certainly——”

“ Certainly do what ?” interrupted Davenant in a taunting voice. “ You'll tell Woolaston, will you? To spare you the trouble, my coy shepherdess, know that Jack Woolaston is not only aware of my intentions, but encourages them; he has offered

offered to put you wholly in my power; and faith if he had had any qualms he is so much in mine, that I should have known how to have quieted them. He owes me a pretty little sum; but as I have put his frosty faced wife and her cash into his hands, he has sworn to pay me the principal out of the first money he touches, and I forgive him the interest in consideration of his using interest with you in my favour."

Shocking as this intelligence was, it seemed like a flash of lightning to the mind of Ethelinde; which, however terrifying in itself, served to shew the precipice on the brink of which she stood. To escape from the insolent grasp which still rudely detained her was however her first and most difficult task, as the brutality of Davenant was likely to subject her to insufferable rudeness, which she might not long have been able to have repelled if two of his grooms had not now approached them in haste. When he dismounted he had let his horse go, who had immediately made his

his way to the stables, where the men seeing him arrive without their master, had enquired of Mr. Woolaston what was become of him ; and Woolaston, who knew that he was more than half drunk in consequence of a morning repast which they had partaken with some friends they had met at the inn, concluded that instead of finding Ethelinde, as he proposed when they parted on the downs, he had fallen from his horse. He directed his servants therefore to go in search of him. The men no sooner approached than Davenant, with horrid imprecations, bade them return as they came : but Ethelinde, dreading nothing so much as being left alone with him again, caught the arm of one of them, and said—“ James, your master has been drinking—I cannot go home with him indeed—I insist on your not leaving us.”

The man, amazed at her terror, stood with his hat off, staring at his master, who now lifted up the end of his whip, and swore that if he did not immediately go he would

would knock him down. Ethelinde; however, continued to cling to him and implore his protection; and the servant, convinced that she had reason for her fears, and who, humble as his station was, had English spirit enough to resist a tyrant in defence of innocence, very calmly told his master that he might strike if he pleased, but that he should not let Miss be frightened by the best man in England.

The fury of Davenant now exceeded all bounds. He levelled a violent blow at the groom, who caught on his arm what would otherwise have been fatal; the other servant, far from taking part with his master, now stepped forward, and though little more than a boy, wrenched the horse whip from his hands and threw it away. Ethelinde in the mean time hurried on in terror not to be described, pursued by Davenant, absolutely raving with passion. He uttered against his servants the most incoherent execrations; and swearing he would instantly discharge his men, he added—
“ and

“ and as for this letter from that beggarly puppy, curse me if you shall ever have it at all.” Thus saying, he tore it to pieces and threw it away; while Ethelinde, in breathless agony, was almost carried into the house by James; and Davenant staggered after; where he related to Woolaston what had passed his own way; and sending for his upper groom, ordered him instantly to discharge the two others, whom he notwithstanding threatened with personal chastisement.

Woolaston dared not blame a conduct of which it was easy to foresee that the consequences would be frightening away Ethelinde, and rendering all their plans abortive. Too much in the power of Davenant, and compelled to keep up appearances with his wife, of whose ready money he was in a few days to be put in possession, he tried to palliate what could not now be remedied. He went himself to Ethelinde's room; and having with difficulty obtained admittance, he endeavoured to soothe and appease her
by

by imputing Davenant's rude behaviour entirely to intoxication, and entreating her to forget and forgive it. Ethelinde, not yet recovered from the tremor into which she had been thrown, answered very little; and Woolaston found it would be still necessary for him to apologize to his wife.

This however was no difficult task. Mrs. Woolaston could see no ill in the conduct of any body whose company gratified him. Her attachment to her husband was indeed such as she had never appeared capable of feeling, and now, he no sooner began to excuse Davenant, and express his regret for the confusion which his indiscretion had made, than she said—"Dear Jack, make no speeches to me; I am not at all angry with Tom Davenant, nor indeed much surpris'd; for that foolish girl is the veriest prude in nature; yet with so much silly vanity that she fancies every man that looks at her is mad for her. Lord! what signified it if Tom did kiss her. I'm sure I wish with all my soul he'd

marry her, and then there would be no more plague with her, and Ned would be quit of the guardianship that he fancies he has undertaken. If she complains to me, I assure you I shall tell her my mind pretty freely. Such a racket indeed! as if a little romping could hurt her."

Woolaston, well pleased to find that all the blame of the fracas would rest on the prudery of Ethelinde, went down to Davenant, and when they had diverted themselves a little at her expence, and laughed at the consternation the loss of Montgomery's letter would occasion, which they thought an excellent joke, they attended Mrs. Woolaston in the dining room. Ethelinde, however, appeared not; and on a message being sent to her she excused herself saying that her long walk had fatigued her. Mrs. Woolaston, not without some severe remarks on her folly, sent up her dinner. As soon as their own was over, and the lady withdrawn, which she seldom did till it was very late, Davenant and his host
set

set in to drinking ; and though the latter, who had a stronger head, contrived to walk out of the room at one in the morning, Davenant was long before that time so entirely brutalized, that after his servants had with difficulty got him into his own room, they were obliged to exert all their strength to prevent his rushing in the fury of complete intoxication towards that of Ethelinde, on whom he vented the most illiberal abuse for her prudery and folly.

CHAPTER III.

THE unhappy Ethelinde had hardly been allowed time to recover from the immediate terror of Davenant's ferocious behaviour before she had been compelled to hear the excuses of Woolaston for his friend; and when she hoped to be alone the rest of the evening, was to undergo the sharp remonstrances of his wife, who however disinclined to give herself any unnecessary trouble, yet as she saw her husband, or fancied she saw him made uneasy by the behaviour of Ethelinde to his friend Davenant, she determined to speak to her about it in terms that should convince her of her disapprobation.

Entering the room, therefore, where the disconsolate Ethelinde sat, ruminating on her wayward destiny, she began by enquiring

ing why she would not come down to dinner.

“ I was fatigued with my walk, Madam: I was terrified and flurried by Mr. Davenant’s very extraordinary behaviour to me.”

“ Really, Miss Chesterville, these conceited airs, this affectation of excessive delicacy is *mighty tiresome*. I thought as you saw more of the world you would get rid of such squeamish folly—a mighty matter indeed! what Davenant asked for a kiss?”

“ Mr. Davenant, Madam, was extremely rude; and so little master of the little reason he usually has, that he appeared capable of any insults. Surely I have reason to complain, when he has taken from me a letter of consequence, and torn it to pieces.”

“ Poor Ethy,” exclaimed Mrs. Woolaston, loudly laughing. “ So he tore your love letter. Well that was really a sad thing; but I’ll devise a punishment for him which will give you ample revenge: make him write you another.”

“ *He* write another?” cried Ethelinde.

“ Aye why not? Why one love letter you know is nearly as good as another; and I dare say with taking scraps out of novels, and a little of Woolaston’s help, who is quite a dab at it, he’d produce you now in a day or two, his dictionary being well consulted, as pretty a love letter as a sentimental Miss need desire to read in an arbour.”

“ I am sorry, Madam,” said Ethelinde, extremely piqued, “ that you make so very light of what is in my mind a most ungentlemanlike and unmanly action; but assuredly if Mr. Davenant possessed greater powers of entertainment than those you are pleased to allow him, I should receive his letters only as an additional insult, and should spurn them as resolutely as I would the most brilliant offers he could make me.”

“ Faith, Ethy, as to offers I am afraid he’ll never give you another opportunity of refusing them; and I am sorry, upon
my

my soul, for it; for notwithstanding all these fine sentiments, and your anger and indignation, I cannot conceive you'd be such a fool as to let them go by if he did."

"You must then, Madam, think me worse than a fool: a wretch without principle, feeling, or honor, if you supposed, that engaged as I am to Mr. Montgomery, I would accept Mr. Davenant had he as many attractive as I think he has disagreeable qualities."

Another loud laugh from Mrs. Woolaston interrupted her—"Lookee, my dear romantic Princess," cried she, "I've now lived so long in the world that I trust not to *professions*. I've heard all these sentiments before, and I've seen young ladies as disinterested as you are consider better of the matter, and discover, when the first lover was out of sight, that a second with a great fortune was no bad substitute. I'll lay twenty to one, that before next grass, when you'll be rising twenty, and have

D 4

picked

picked up a little more sense, you'll make a match with Davenant."

"Never!" exclaimed Ethelinde, "I had rather perish."

Mrs. Woolaston now left her, having laughed and talked herself out of the slight anger she felt on her entering the room; and Ethelinde, who had been interrupted by her appearance from a contemplation on the means to recover her letter, or at least the fragments of it, rejoiced at her departure; and as soon as she was convinced from enquiries she made of the servants, that Davenant and Woolaston were set in to drinking, she went, though it was now dark, softly down stairs, and gliding out of the house by a way which led to the back of the stables, she went towards the place where the letter had been torn.

The wind had dispersed it, and a few only of the largest portions remained on the spot. These she put into her bosom, and fancied that they acted as a talisman to soothe its throbbing anguish. The night

was

was mild and calm; and as the moon now appeared through the fleecy clouds that were gathered over the sea, she hoped if she waited a little it would afford her light enough to recover the remaining fragments of this precious manuscript. In this she was not deceived. In about half an hour, a lovely clear moon was unveiled; and wandering in every direction round the spot, she collected the remaining pieces, which Davenant in his fury had not torn very small; and at length believing she had them all, she was returning home free from every apprehension, for she feared nobody but Davenant, when she suddenly saw two men mounting the hill, and knew that as there was no covert near, to escape them was impossible.

She walked therefore, though with a palpitating heart, towards the house as quickly as she could. The men approached; and her fears were immediately relieved by finding that they were the two grooms who

had rescued her from their master's influence.

They pulled off their hats as they passed her, and wished her health and happiness. "I hope," said she, imagining immediately that they were discharged—"I hope I have not been the means of your losing your places."

"Yes, Ma'am," replied James. "Master ordered us to be discharged, and so Mr. Mash has paid us off; but I assure you that if 'twas to do again I should do just the same. I can get another place; but I could not have answered it to my conscience to have left you with Mr. Davenant. I'm sorry to say it, Miss; and sorry to fright you; but you ben't in good hands."

"Not in good hands!" cried Ethelinde, terrified and amazed. "Do, good James, if you have reason to believe so, explain yourself."

"Why then, Miss, I'll tell you what I know. Mr. Davenant makes no secret among us in the stable, especially when he's
a little

a little in liquor, of any thing as he've a mind to; and of late he has said more than once that some time ago he would have married you; but now he knew better; as your father was dead, and you'd no money, your pride must come down to other terms. Mash, the head groom, is quite in his favor, and I've heard discourse between them that I cannot repeat—I'm sure they did not talk like honest men; and Mash for his own ends encourages Mr. Davenant in worser doings than he would think on himself. For my part, I'm not much better than other folks, but it makes me stare again some times to see the rate they goes on at; and I know that Mash have said to Master that he should get you away down to one of his own houses, and shew you what fine places he have, and what great estates."

"Is it possible," said Ethelinde, trembling, "that such a design can have been conceived?"

"Lord, Miss," answered the man, "that's nothing. Mash fears neither God nor

nor man, nor devil; and if Master Davenant will but pay him well would run the hazard of being hanged as soon as not. 'Twould make a stone speak to hear him tell the wickedness he helped to do at his last place, at Lord Danesforte's."

"Lord Danesforte's!" cried Ethelinde, whose terror was excited by the very name.

"Yes, Miss; and Mr. Davenant got him from my Lord by doubling his wages. To be sure he has a great place; but there —'tis money got, as one may say, with a rope round one's neck."

"And have you ever heard of any design in particular against me?"

"I can hardly tell that. I've heard Mr. Davenant swearing and complaining that he could make nothing of you, and I've heard Mash say in answer, that his honour never would till his advice was taken; and then often and often they have gone and consulted together."

"I am very much obliged to you, James," said Ethelinde, "for this information;

mation; but indeed I am greatly concerned that your generous defence of me should have thrown you out of your bread. To make you adequate amends is not in my power; accept however of this trifle; and do you, Peter," addressing herself to the other, "allow me to offer you this."

She would then have put a guinea into the hand of each; but the elder refused it, and held the hand of the other who was a mere lad.—“No, no, Miss,” said he, “what we did was not for love of gain. We’ve a good deal of wages in our pockets, and places are more plenty than parish churches. I’d scorn to take fee or reward for saving a fine young lady like you from such a man as ’Squire Davenant. I think he’ve enough on em already.”

Ethelinde, while the man was yet speaking, was meditating how she should act. To stay at Brackwood appeared at once to be impossible; yet whither could she fly? She gave herself no time, however, to digest two or three plans that arose confusedly in
her

her mind; only determining to go, without considering whither, she said, after a moment's pause—

“ James, the circumstances you have mentioned make me determine to quit Mrs. Woolaston this evening. Can you at three o'clock in the morning, procure me a chaise on the road to Dorchester?”

James answering in the affirmative, and offering to come with it himself, Ethelinde again offered her little present, which the man still resolutely refused, but consented that his comrade should receive what she wished him to take. Such terrors now possessed her that she dreaded returning to the house; but that being unavoidable, she desired James to accompany her to the door, which he did without being perceived. He then left her to make the best of his way to the town from whence he was to procure the chaise; and Ethelinde, with light steps, and a heart filled with tumultuous fears, stole to her own room, where she locked herself in; but it was some time before

before she could acquire composure enough to consider steadily the step on which she had hastily determined.

Montgomery's letter, however, the fragments of which she had folded up in a sheet of paper, and put into her bosom, she now anxiously took up; but too much agitated to attempt to re-adjust the pieces, and decypher it, she could only kiss the torn reliëts, and bathe them with tears, which seemed to relieve her heart of great part of the anguish and terror that weighed upon it.

She then attempted to recall and consider the conversation of Davenant's servant. Every thing ill she could readily believe of a man so unprincipled as he now appeared to her, yet though she doubted not his disposition to evil, she could hardly conceive that he would venture on any where personal hazard could be incurred; yet what or whom had he to fear in insulting her? Not Sir Edward, for he was absent in the South of Europe; not her brother, who was she knew not where, for no intelligence
of

of him had yet been received ; not Montgomery, for he was gone where her injuries would not reach his knowledge till they might be without remedy, and from whence he might never return. Her heart fainted within her at this retrospect of her forlorn situation. She looked in vain for pity and protection from Woolaston or his wife : they were too evidently inclined to favor Davenant in his designs, whatever those designs might be ; and Mrs. Montgomery, the only friend to whose protection she could fly, was not yet in England ; nor had she one person whom she could venture to believe would receive and befriend her till the period of that dear friend's return secured her an asylum. She ran over in her mind every expedient, but could find none satisfactory ; she even doubted whether any alarm was sufficient to authorize her to quit the asylum where Sir Edward had placed her ; yet the change in Mrs. Woolaston's family, of which Sir Edward was not even yet apprized, made a great difference.

difference in the necessity of her obedience to his wishes; and she was sure that his opinion of Davenant was such as would secure her his approbation of any step which should free her from the insolence of his pretensions.

Thus in the severest perturbation of mind some hours passed; she now put together a few of her cloaths; now desisted, and determined to trust to Providence for protection, and to remain where she was; now she sat down to write to Mrs. Woolaston, to thank her for her civilities, and account for her departure; and then again trembled at the step she was about to take, and shrunk from launching alone and unprotected into a world of which she knew but little, and nothing that did not tend to encrease the terror with which she contemplated it.

While she thus doubted and hesitated, the sound of Davenant's voice on the stairs, apparently in contention with Woolaston, who seemed trying to appease him, gave
new

new force to her fears. She listened; she heard her name repeated amid a volley of the most horrid oaths; and fancying that he would even then force his way into her room, she double locked it, while her trembling hands attempted to make it more secure by their feeble pressure against it.

After a moment, however, the tumult appeared to cease; the house became quiet; but the alarm of Ethelinde's spirits subsided not so easily; and this last terror determined at once her wavering resolution. She was convinced that what Davenant had himself told her was true; and that Woolaston was wholly in his power. She was equally certain that the man who had delivered her from his insults had more ground than mere conjecture for the interpretation he had put on the frequent consultations between his master and the upper groom; and what she had just heard was a specimen of what Davenant was capable of when inflamed by wine, of which he was now accustomed to swallow such quantities that
he

he could hardly ever be said to be perfectly sober.

Her indecision thus ended, she put up such of her cloaths as were immediately necessary in a small caravan trunk; and sealing up the rest, she sat down to direct them; but then remembered that when she quitted the house she was then in, she knew not whither to go; nor even where she could ask the slight favour of room for the trunks that contained her apparel. Her mind in this distress glanced towards her own relations; but, except Clarinthia Ludford, there was not among them one from whom she had ever received the least attention; and from the idea of encountering the vulgar importance and humiliating pity of her aunt, and the impertinent familiarity of her little pert cousin Rupert, her whole heart recoiled. But except her elder uncle, whom she had never seen, she had no other family connections on her mother's side; and from Lord Hawkhurst she expected nothing. With whatever reluctance

tance therefore, she was compelled to determine to remain at Dorchester, where she proposed to procure a private lodging, and wait the answer of Clarinthia Ludford, to whom she proposed to write, requesting the protection of her aunt till the return of Mrs. Montgomery.

Having once determined, she became more composed, and sat down to write to Mrs. Woolaston: when she very candidly confessed that Mr. Davenant's behaviour had compelled her to quit a place where she might be again made liable to such treatment. She thanked her in the warmest terms for the kind protection she had so long afforded her; and concluded with many wishes for her health and happiness.

Then being convinced that the house was perfectly quiet, and the moon, though almost down, affording her a faint light, she took the trunk in her hand, and softly gliding down stairs, she opened the door which led towards the stables, crossed the stable yard, and ascended the hill; her
heart

heart beating violently, and her spirits failing her at every step she took. The pale and uncertain light lent by the last rays of the moon, now sinking in the sea; the stillness of every thing around her; the hazard she was incurring in trusting herself at such a time and in a place so remote, to a man she knew nothing of; all contributed to overwhelm her with terror: but to remain where Davenant was master, after all she had suffered and all she had reason to apprehend, appeared so much more terrible, that though slowly and with faltering steps, she still found in her fears courage to go on. At length she arrived at the spot where she expected the chaise; and where she began to doubt whether she should find it. But James had been punctual to his appointment; and no sooner saw her than he approached and informed her that the chaise, which had been above an hour in waiting, was only a few yards lower on the hill. Ethelinde, breathless with many fears, was incapable of thanking her conductor,

ductor, but followed him, though not without increased agitation. The chaise however soon appeared, and part of her alarm subsided. She was soon placed in it; James mounted behind; and in a very short time she reached Dorchester. In her way thither she had time to reflect that Weymouth, a place the continual resort of strangers, was much properer for her than Dorchester, as she would there be much less liable to observations which might be unfavourable to her; as it must appear singular that so young a woman should fix alone in a place where she was wholly unconnected. It was farther also from Brackwood; and these united reasons determined her merely to change horses at Dorchester, and go on immediately. She communicated this resolution to James when she arrived at the inn, and begged to be allowed to reward him for his services; but he not only again refused her money, but desired leave to see her safe to the place where she intended to remain. Ethelinde
was

was now convinced of his honesty: and as he assured her that it would not be at all out of his way, as he was going back into Devonshire, his native country, she consented to accept his farther attendance: and without any accident arrived about twelve at noon at Weymouth, where she was immediately accommodated with a private lodging; and after the extreme fatigue and alarm she had undergone, within the last four and twenty hours, she found herself in a place of safety; and enjoyed quiet and refreshing repose.

The next morning, before Ethelinde could determine to begin her letter to Clarintha Ludford, she began with painful pleasure to put together the fragments of Montgomery's letter, which had been written on several sheets of long paper. Some pieces were still wanting; but these Ethelinde by her imagination supplied, and read with satisfaction, that as his departure became inevitable his mind had acquired courage to bear his separation
from

from her with more calmness, and that his first wish was, to hear of her once more before he lost sight of the coast of England. The rest of his letter contained the warmest entreaties that she would take care of her health; repeated exhortations to go directly to his mother as soon as she arrived; and concluded with presages of their future meeting in happiness and security more sanguine than any he had before appeared to entertain.

The animated description which he gave of his feelings on embarking were not wanting to depress and melt her. Not knowing whether the ship on board which he was had certainly passed the coast of Dorset, she felt a mournful pleasure in believing it yet possible that she might see it; and in this idea she proposed passing most of the hours she should remain at Weymouth on the beach.

But before she began to indulge this romantic but soothing weakness, it was necessary for her to write to Miss Ludford:
it

it was a task which she reluctantly undertook, but at length she finished and sent away the following letter—

“ You will I believe, my dear Miss Ludford, be much surpris'd at receiving a letter from me ; but the marriage of Miss Newenden and other reasons making my continuance with her inconvenient, I am perswaded that Mrs. Ludford, who before I was so unfortunate as to lose my father obligingly offered to receive me for a few months, will now allow me the pleasure of being with you and of paying my respects to her, till the return of Mrs. Montgomery, who is detained in France longer than she expected. If, however, my aunt will be at all incommoded by granting me this favor, I am sure I have no right to ask it, and I beg, my dear cousin, that you will in an early answer inform me without reserve whether such a visitor for about three weeks will be agreeable to all your family : to whom allow me to offer compliments

and respects; and let me assure you that I am, my dear Miss Ludford,

very affectionately your's,

ETHELINDE CHESTERVILLE."

Weymouth, March 24, 17—.

Ethelinde, having altered her letter half a dozen times, sealed and sent it at last without being satisfied with what she had written. Her dislike to her aunt, from the little she had seen of her, was invincible; and she felt so great a repugnance to asking any favour of her, and so great an aversion to become an inmate in her house, that she sometimes wished she might be refused, and might in the repulse of the only relation to whom she could apply, find an excuse for remaining alone in the lodgings where she now was till Mrs. Montgomery's return.

While she waited the letter from Bristol, which was to determine her, she lived, notwithstanding the very cold March winds, on the sea shore; and whenever she descried a
large

large ship, in making eager enquiries. After two days, however, thus spent, she learned from the papers that the vessel about which she was anxious was seen off Plymouth proceeding with a fair wind. All hopes, therefore, of enjoying the chimerical and gloomy satisfaction of supposing she beheld the distant sail that waded her lover from her, was at an end; but in the sublime yet melancholy scenes which the rocks and sands afforded, she still found a pensive and not unpleasing occupation; and still she loved—

“ To stray along the beach,
 “ Asking of every surge that bathed her foot
 “ If ever it had touch'd the ship's tall sides.”*

In this way, and in reading over a hundred times all the letters she possessed from Montgomery, particularly the last, the time passed, though in entire solitude, not unpleasingly, till she was roused from the mournful tranquillity by receiving the two following letters with the Bristol post mark, under a franked cover. That from the elder lady, which she first opened, ran thus.

* Three lines of Cooper's, speaking of Omai, a little altered to suit the circumstance.

“ Dear niece,

“ I have seen your letter to Miss Ludford; and since you have now no home, shall be willing to receive you till such time as the person you mention (whom I do not know) can take you. I must say I should have taken it kinder if you had given a preference to your relations before you were forced to it. However your remissness shall make no difference; as I make it a rule to be as kind as I can to my family who want it of me: I bless God they are but few, and those who are able should help the rest. I have ordered one of my footmen to be at the Bear at Bath on Tuesday next, and he will take a post chaise from the inn there for you to come on, as I should not chuse my relation should be seen to come to Bristol in a stage coach. I am, dear niece,

your well-wisher, and sincere friend,

DOROTHY LUDFORD.”

Bristol, March 31st.

Disgusted, mortified, and almost wholly deterred from any farther thoughts of being under the smallest obligation to her coarse minded

minded aunt, Ethelinde now read the second letter, which was to this effect.

“ You cannot conceive, my dearest creature, the excessive delight which your sweet letter inspired. I am charmed to a degree with the thoughts of seeing you; pray lose no time, for you cannot guess at my immense impatience, my lovely Ethelinde, to embrace you; and I am absolutely enchanted with the notion of your staying with us. Alas! my angel, you have no idea of the excessive want I am in at this period of a dear confidential friend like your amiable self, to whom I can unveil all the embarrassments and secrets of my bosom in tender sympathy. I long too for a tender and reciprocal communication from you. I have so much to tell you that we shall never have done. I am half wild with pleasure, and our Rupert is not less exquisitely pleased at the idea of our beauteous visitor. My mother regulates your journey; and I have only to repeat that I conjure you, my love, to hasten to your most affectionate and impatient

CLARINTHIA!”

The romantic warmth of the second letter was hardly less displeasing to Ethelinde than the frigid and reluctant style of the first. Again she deliberated whether she should accept an asylum that promised only mortification on one side from her aunt, and on the other folly and absurdity from Clarinthia, if not impertinence from Rupert. After some reflection, however, she considered that the necessity of her staying with them could exist no longer than till Mrs. Montgomery's return; and that if that wished-for period was delayed beyond a fortnight or three weeks, and her stay with her aunt was found as irksome in reality as it appeared in prospect, she could at any time quit a house where nobody had power to enforce her continuance, and might retire to a lodging. She had about thirty guineas in her possession, which Sir Edward had sent to her before her departure; and that would, she thought, be sufficient to support her, if, after a trial which prudence directed her to make, the abode at Mrs. Ludford's was found even for so short a time insupportable. She resolved, therefore, to go; and having written to Sir Edward, stating
very

very frankly her reason for quitting his sister, and her present intentions, she departed in a post chaise for Bristol, early on the next morning but one after she had received her aunt's and cousin's answer.

Nothing material occurred on the road; and at Bath she met the servant sent by her aunt, who had already provided a chaise, in which she soon reached the end of her journey.

The carriage no sooner stopped at the door than Clarinthia flew down to receive her, and embraced her with a thousand affectionate professions which she had hardly left herself breath to make. Ethelinde was a poor dissembler, and knew not how to put on the semblance of that affection for her cousin which she did not feel; but her native sweetness and elegance of manners, left no deficiency visible in the eyes of Clarinthia, who was no very accurate observer, and generally so occupied by her own fancied sensibility that if she could prevail upon any dear friend to listen to its effusions, she thought very little of their real sentiments. Having at length exhausted the first violence of her delight, Ethe-

linde was conducted up stairs, where Mrs. Ludford sat in form to receive her; her son, half reclining on a sofa, with a book in his hand, repeated as she entered—

“ So from the dappled east the morning breaks.”

He then sauntered towards her; saluted her with great freedom, and led her to his mother, who, hardly rising, said—“ So! child, how d’ye do?” Fatigue, anxiety, and a recollection which at that moment arose, of other journeys she had made when a father’s arms had protected her or were eagerly extended for her reception, altogether conquered the firmness with which Ethelinde had been trying to meet this disagreeable moment. She attempted to return her aunt’s cold enquiry by expressing some pleasure at seeing her; but her tongue refused its office; her eyes filled with tears; and she was forced to take out her handkerchief, and sit down.

Mrs Ludford, far from being affected, was offended; and impatient to impress on her niece all her own consequence, and a proper sense of the obligation she owed to her, she said in a very ungracious way—“ I hope,
niece

niece Chefterville, that what has happened to you fince you laft vifited Bristol, has made you reflect on your *fituation*; and corrected the little unbecoming pride, which, as your relation, child, I thought myfelf obliged to tell you of. So! your poor father, I find, died infolvent at laft?"

Ethelinde, feeling moft fenfibly all the cruelty of this addrefs, could only anfwer with her tears; and her aunt unfeelingly proceeded—

“ I always knew indeed how it muft be— I am really extremely concerned. However, child, you will find me and Mifs Ludford extremely kind to you as long as you continue to deserve it. Pray, who is that Mrs.— what d’ye call her?—some Scotch name— Clarinthia, my dear, what was the name that Ethy mentioned?"

“ Montgomery, Madam.”

“ Aye, true, Montgomery; pray, niece, who is ſhe?"

Had not Ethelinde been difabled from answering this queſtion by the tears and fighs which the mortifying contraſt between her former and her preſent proſpects excited, ſhe

would have found it very difficult to have answered without betraying some part of the resentment which this affectation of forgetfulness, and contemptuous manner of speaking of her friends and of her beloved father, raised even in her gentle bosom : but the pain she endured was too acute ; and fortunately Clarinthia, who, though she professed much more feeling than she had, was not entirely void of it, relieved her by saying—“ Dear Ma’am, I believe my cousin is too much fatigued to enter into conversation this afternoon. My dear Ethelinde, had you not rather retire?”

“ If you please,” sobbed the unresisting sufferer, who dreaded nothing so much as the coarse interrogatories or harsh remonstrances of her insensible and haughty aunt. She then slightly curtsying to the mother and the son, (who during this disgusting reception had gazed on her with a degree of impertinent freedom as offensive as the insulting questions of his mother) left the room, and was shewn by Clarinthia into the apartment prepared for her, which was a neat room adjoining to her own. As soon as she reached it, she threw herself

herself

herself into a chair and yielded to the excess of anguish that oppressed her. She already bitterly repented having put herself in the power of Mrs. Ludford; and the conversation in which Clarinthia already attempted to engage her was not likely to reconcile her to an abode where only a comfortless vicissitude between arrogance and folly seemed to await her. Clarinthia besought her to compose herself, brought her a glass of water with drops in it, and seemed really solicitous for her recovery from the agitation of spirits into which her mother's harsh manners had thrown her; but Ethelinde no sooner became more tranquil, than Clarinthia was so eager to take advantage of it, that it appeared as if she had been less solicitous for the relief of her cousin than for some body to listen to those narratives which she had such a violent inclination to relate, and of which she was herself the heroine.

“ I am so glad, my sweet girl,” said she, “ that you are come, for I have been dying to see you! 'Tis so difficult to find a tender sympathetic friend worthy of one's confidence! You cannot imagine how ill and deceitful Miss Nelson behaved; so I have quite broke

with

with her: she told every where of an affair that I entrusted her with; and it was with the greatest difficulty I could prevent it from coming to papa's knowledge. In your gentle and faithful bosom I am sure I may repose all my sorrows."

"Of sorrows," replied Ethelinde, faintly; "I should hope and believe you, my cousin, could not have many."

"Ah! you little know, my fair Ethelinde," replied Miss Ludford, putting on an air of despondency, "you little know the embarrassments of a tender, a too susceptible heart; wishing to obey parental commands, yet involuntarily and devotedly attached to another beloved object."

Ethelinde felt less than ever disposed to become the confidant of her romantic cousin, when she found that whatever attachment she had was contrary to the approbation of one if not of both her parents; but to avoid it was impossible; and she was not now in a state of mind calm enough to consider how she should act, whether hear in silence, or remonstrate if she found, as she greatly feared, that the greatest charm Clarinda found in having
an

an *attachment*, was in having so placed it, as to be sure of an opposition from her family, and to have laid a plan for such imaginary miseries as might establish her in her own opinion the "heroine of a tale of sympathy," not unworthy the place she contemplated with the most pleasure—a modern circulating library.

Ethelinde, compelled therefore to listen to a long and romantic history of feeling and sentiment, could not obtain a release till she had promised to give her cousin her sincere opinion of her situation the next day; and then fatigued and unhappy, she was suffered to retire to her bed, Clarinthia undertaking to make her excuse for her not appearing at supper.

CHAP.

CHAPTER IV..

THE next morning, Ethelinde was constrained to hear a long and insulting harangue from her aunt, who ostentatiously displayed her own great kindness in thus receiving her when she had lost all those friends on whom she preferably depended ; and concluded with a lecture on the prudence necessary to young women who were destitute of fortune.—“ You are still I see in mourning, child,” said she at the end of this tedious discourse ; “ I forget how long your unfortunate father has been dead ?”

“ Not yet three months, Madam : but had more time elapsed since that regretted period, I should not have changed my dress.”

“ Why perhaps you are right, niece. It is convenient, as I suppose you have no great change of cloaths. However as to that Miss Ludford will assist you when you are out of mourning, so as that you may appear properly when we go in the summer to Southampton, and

and I will be very willing myself to make you some little elegant additions to your drefs. I dare fay we fhall do mighty well together; for though we are not people of title, fuch, you know, as you have been ufed to; yet I make it a rule to have the beft of every thing; and to have all fuch little matters fashionable and genteel about me, fo that I fhould not chufe to have *my* niece appear otherwife."

"There is, I flatter myself, no danger of my difgracing you, Madam," faid Ethelinde, with all the fpirit ſhe could affume. "While my father lived, his tendernefs fupplied me with more cloaths of every kind than I had occaſion for. I am not a bad œconomift; and I have ftill a much more extenſive wardrobe than I am likely to have occaſion for. At Graſmere, where I hope to be before the end of the ſummer, drefs is very immaterial, and the ſimpleſt will fuffice me, as it does my beloved friend, who, in ſuch plain apparel as is uſually worn by Quakers, retains, with true elegance of appearance, manners which would do honour to the moſt refined ſociety."

"What, do you tell *me*," faid Mrs. Ludford, frowning with contempt and anger, "of
your

your quakers and your refined societies. You've got a young fellow in your head, and are grown careless, I see, of the opinion of every body else but those that belong to him. A Scotch woman, without money, is mighty likely indeed to have an elegant appearance. However, Miss, if you have no more discernment, I am sure you are mighty welcome to seek your highland friends, and to wrap yourself up in a plaid, and live on oat cakes if you please; I have done my duty; I have acquitted myself; and all the world will do me the justice to say, that let what will befall you, I have acted the part of a generous and kind relation; but there is some people one cannot serve; so whenever or wherever you chuse to go, I wash my hands of the consequences."

Ethelinde, whose spirits the slightest effort exhausted, could give no other reply to this cruelty than tears; but Clarinthia, who had been absent during the greatest part of this dialogue, now returned; and appeasing her mother as well as she could, who had indeed almost talked herself out of breath, she carried the desolate Ethelinde away with her to
undergo

undergo a new species of persecution in being consulted on a love epistle which she was composing to the "dear youth," with whom she carried on in despite of Ethelinde's remonstrances a clandestine correspondence.

Thus, between the gross and unfeeling insults of her aunt, and the weak and dangerous confidences of her cousin, many days passed heavily along. The latter she determined never to encourage, though she did not think herself justified in betraying them; and for the former, she endeavoured to bear them with patience, in reflecting that the time now approached when the arrival of Mrs. Montgomery in England would release her from such irksome dependence for ever.

The disagreeable circumstances of her situation were, however, soon increased by the return of Rupert Ludford from London, whither he had gone the day after Ethelinde's arrival at Bristol. He seemed to have brought with him a reinforcement of the vanity and affectation which had before rendered him so extremely disgusting to Ethelinde; nor did he possess one virtue to palliate his numerous follies. Brought up by a mother coarse minded

minded and selfish, as an only son, he had imbibed all her narrowness of spirit; and his boundless opinion of himself, made him look on half the world as beings who were without consequence if they contributed not in some way or other to his gratification; and on the other half as people with whom Nature designed him to be on a level, though he was unfortunately a step below them by being connected with trade. Every journey he made to London rendered the name of a merchant at Bristol more odious to his ears, and increased his desire for the arrival of that period when he should be enabled to throw off all his mercantile connections, and give his talents to the cultivation of poetry and the fine arts, and his time to those noble friends, who, however reluctantly he admitted the idea, he was now tempted to suspect, were frequently more accommodated by the money they occasionally borrowed of him, than gratified by his conversation. Among an extensive acquaintance, he had no chosen friend but Emmerley, who with a small fortune had taken to the bar, where, having too little genius to advance without close attention, and being too idle to
apply,

apply, he fauntered away life without getting at all forwarder ; and while he found an excellent table at Ludford House during every vacation, was content with the name of a barrister, to retain only the pertness which sometimes adheres to the character ; which pertness an unblushing confidence in his own intellectual advantages, made him fancy was wit. If he was not witty himself, he was the cause of wit in others ; for he acted occasionally as the sharpener or the butt of that which Mr. Rupert was incessantly labouring to produce ; and whenever they were in company together, the attention of the whole circle was usually engrossed by their play upon each other, to the great edification of the hearers, and to the delight of Mrs. Ludford, who generally laughed immoderately at the sprightly sallies which were in these dialogues exhibited.

Old Ludford, though he was much less delighted with his son's acquirements, was yet too much accustomed to submit in many instances to his wife to dispute that judgment which had directed his education, and which now with so much complacency contemplated its effects. He saw, with pleasure, that in the
main

main point Bobby (he had not yet learned to soften his name to Rupert) adhered to excellent maxims, and continued to love money, though he declined to assist in acquiring it. With some of the loans he had made to his great friends, his father had been acquainted, and had seen good security taken; others, where that could not bear very close inspection, Mr. Rupert had kept to himself, and raised the money on his own credit unknown to the old gentleman: and if at any time the father remonstrated on his current expences, which sometimes ran high, he knew how to pique his pride by representing the necessity there was for a man whose father was known to be so opulent, to appear respectable; and he awakened his avarice, while he put his apprehensions to sleep, by talking of contracts and agencies to be procured by the interest of the personages to whose society the figure he made obtained him admission. Old Ludford was of a plodding heavy temper, but not without ambition of making his name of consequence, nor insensible to that sort of pride which makes a man value himself on a large fortune of his own acquiring. If therefore he
occasionally

Occasionally suffered some pain from his son's expences, his ambition and vanity immediately healed the wound ; and he forgave his diffipation in favour of his genius and abilities, which his wife often assured Mr. Ludford were such as must, whenever Rupert obtained a feat in parliament (which it was in contemplation to procure for him) raise him to the first notice, and probably the first posts.

Ethelinde had seen enough of her cousin Rupert and of his friend Emmersley to dread their arrival as a misfortune which almost counterbalanced the satisfaction she felt at the removal of the family from Bristol to Ludford House. It was now the middle of April ; and in the country Ethelinde hoped to have a few hours in which, amid the enchanting progress of spring, she might be suffered uninterruptedly to think of Montgomery, and offer up her prayers to heaven for his preservation. At Bristol, she was hardly ever a moment alone unless in the hours usually given to repose ; for her aunt always insisted on her appearing in company, where she failed not to hint at the indigent condition to which her niece, though the grand daughter of an Earl,

was

was reduced, and at her own goodness in protecting her. This, which was usually delivered in an half whisper, drew the eyes of the company on the blushing and mortified Ethelinde; and could she have doubted of what her aunt had been saying, the humiliating and affected pity which the generality of the hearers afterwards threw into their behaviour towards her would have convinced her of the tenor of Mrs. Ludford's conversation. If ever the elder ladies were so deeply engaged at cards that she could escape unperceived by them to her own room, it was impossible to elude the vigilance of Clarinthia, who had always some sentimental sorrow or sympathetic embarrassment to relate; while she appeared quite insensible of the real and heavy distresses of her cousin. Much of their time passed in visiting people, who, amid great affluence, were so ignorant and under bred, that Ethelinde shrunk from their society with a dislike that it was impossible for her to conquer, and difficult for her to conceal. She saw that the matrons despised her for being poor, hated her for being nobly born, and imputed her melancholy to pride: while the

Misses

Misses eyed her with disdain as a dependent on their equal Clara Ludford, and as such affected to treat her; while they were not without apprehensions of her engrossing the favour of Rupert, for whose partiality many of them had hitherto contended with so little decided preference, that he had occasionally celebrated all; and each had a *sweet copy of verses* to shew wherein she was the Amoret, Phillida, or Amaryllis, that had employed the amorous muse of this mercantile and versatile poet.

Amid society so utterly unpleasant to her, Ethelinde had nothing either to divert or soothe her settled sorrow, or her present anxiety for Mrs. Montgomery's return, of which she yet heard nothing. At Ludford House, whither the family now removed for a few weeks, she flattered herself that she should be more at liberty to be wretched; and not compelled, while her heart was breaking, to attend to scandalous anecdotes about people of whom she knew nothing; or frivolous details of dinners given, or fashions arrived, or servants discharged; which, with a few other equally uninteresting topics, composed the usual conversation

versation she was condemned to hear. This removal would not, she knew, relieve her either from the barbarous taunts which she occasionally endured from her aunt, from the harrassing secrets of her intriguing cousin, or the mixture of feigned admiration and insulting compassion, with which, on her first arrival, Rupert had received her. Fortunately, however, the ton which he had last acquired in London was that of indolence and apathy. He found himself fatigued with every thing, was amazed how he could ever have found any satisfaction in dancing, or walking, or riding, and declared that the first and only acquirement worth the attention of a man of sense or fashion was to be perfectly at ease.

Ethelinde felt, in the respite which this new mode of being fashionable gave her from his rhymes and compliments, the only comfort she had long known; and a few days after she was settled at Ludford House, she had the much greater satisfaction of receiving a letter from Sir Edward Newenden, in which he highly approved of her reasons for quitting Mrs. Woolaiton (at whose marriage he expressed a mixture of displeasure and concern) and

and besought her to remain with Mrs. Ludford till the return of Mrs. Montgomery. He enclosed her an order for money, and a letter of credit on his Banker in London for any amount that she might want before he wrote to her again, as he informed her that he was now removing towards Italy. To this letter, which was filled with expressions of paternal tenderness for her, he added, that as to himself, he was well, "and not more unhappy than usual." He gave a pleasing account of his children, on whose daily improvement he dwelt with fondness; but Lady Newenden he only named as being, together with her father and Mrs. Maltravers, in good health. And Ethelinde, gratified as she was by his approbation of her conduct, and unfailing friendship, could not without bitterness perceive, that, deserving as he was of affection, gratitude and esteem, he was yet unhappy in that quarter whence he had the greatest right to expect felicity.

CHAPTER V.

ANOTHER fortnight passed, and still no intelligence arrived of Mrs. Montgomery—The depression of Ethelinde's mind grew hourly greater; and her health proportionably suffered. Deprived of every thing that could render life desirable; and doubting whether she ever should be restored to those friends, without whom it would become a burthen; compelled to affect a tranquillity she could not feel, or be exposed to reproaches for pride, coldness and affectation; she had no respite but in sleep; which, though often broken and disturbed, yet afforded her sometimes more pleasing images than her waking hours presented; and she now never beheld the dawn of the day without regretting its return, and entering reluctantly on a scene of painful dissimulation and continual internal uneasiness.

Clarinthia's wild and romantic turn created one of the daily difficulties she had to encounter.

counter. Ethelinde found, that far from having any steady affection for the young officer with whom she clandestinely corresponded, she had discarded her former lover whom she once preferred, only because her father who had at first opposed his pretensions, at length encouraged them, in consequence of the death of an elder brother, by which he became heir to a considerable fortune. This young man, whose name was Southcote, still visited at the House, and having really conceived an early attachment to Clarinthia, her caprice and ill treatment had not yet divested him of his passion.—**B**ut Clarinthia had found out that there was more heroism in giving herself to a man who had nothing, than in acceding to the mercenary views of her Father; and when Ethelinde attempted to argue with her on this subject, she was silenced by Clarinthia, saying, “Nay, my dear Ethelinde, did you not refuse Davenant and engage yourself to Montgomery, who is not richer than my beloved Rivers; and surely, if you with all your prudence would do this, I have at least as much pretension to prefer the man I love.

My father will be angry at first perhaps, but I know, that marry how I will, he will give me twenty thousand pounds."

While they remained at Bristol, Clarinthia contrived easily to receive letters from her lover, and the only tax she levied then on Ethelinde was obliging her to read them, and to hear her answers: but now she expected of her another concession; which was, to suffer the Captain's letters to be directed under cover to her. This Ethelinde absolutely refused, and a coldness arose from thence on the part of Clarinthia, which was soon aggravated into absolute hatred. Mr. Southcote had not for some months been at Bristol; but business, relative to his West India property, now bringing him thither, he came over to Ludford House to pass some days, and was still considered by the old gentleman as the lover of his daughter. He had not however been three days in the company of Ethelinde, before his attachment to her cousin was entirely eradicated; and he very frankly told her, that being now convinced he had nothing to hope, he had determined to persecute her no more with his passion: but being still
desirous

desirous of connecting himself with a family he so highly esteemed, he entreated her interest with her amiable cousin."

Clarinthia, who had listened to this speech with amazement and mortification, burst into a convulsive laugh of mingled spite and contempt. "O! yes Sir," replied she—"Yes! you may depend upon my interest with my amiable cousin; only, as unluckily she is engaged, I am afraid neither my interest nor your own extraordinary merits will have any effect."

Southcote now eagerly desired an explanation; but Clarinthia, though resolute before to reject him, was now so piqued at his resignation of her, and preference of Ethelinde, that she answered him only with contemptuous raillery, and no sooner quitted him than she sought her cousin, who had escaped from the breakfast table to wander in a coppice at a small distance from the house; whereas Mrs. Ludford had hitherto forborne to exercise her taste, she found quiet and some degree of pleasure in contemplating the beauties with which nature lavishly embellishes the most rustic spots to-

wards the end of April. Seated on the turf, she was lost in the pensive pleasure of reading over Montgomery's letters, when Clarinthia, who knew her usual haunts, interrupted her, and with an air which extremely excited her surprize, cried as she approached—"I beg pardon, Miss Chesterville, I hope I don't disturb you? but I could not delay wishing you joy."

"Joy, of what my Cousin?"

"Oh, you don't know I dare say—or else lovers are with you such common acquirements, that one or two, more or less, are not worth your attention."

"Upon my word, Clara, I am quite ignorant of your meaning."

"So! I admire the *sang froid* of some people.—What, you don't know that Southcote is in love with you and gives me up?—To be sure, he is much in the right, and my *discarded* lover does well to console himself with your gentle attractions.—I told him however you were engaged."

"You did well; and I hope, that whether this story originates in some raillery of his, or merely from some misunderstanding of yours,

yours, that I at least shall hear no more of it."

"That would be a pity," retorted Clarinthia with encreasing acrimony; "No, pray have the glory of refusing a man who was once thought not unworthy of *me*; and boast, of having for the sake of the dear Montgomery, discarded two men, both of fortunes superior to what even *I* have a right to expect."

"Surely, Clarinthia, you are out of humour this morning, or something has strangely changed you. When did I ever boast of having discarded any lover? or what reason have I ever given you to suppose that I should be gratified by the addresses of Mr. Southcote? If however that were really the case, why should you be angry, since he is as you acknowledge discarded by you?"

"Oh, I beg you won't fancy neither," cried Clarinthia in a tone between a laugh and a cry—"I beg you won't fancy child, that I care about him; so far from it, I am sure I should be glad if you were to have him tomorrow."

Ethelinde easily perceived that her cousin was weak and vain enough to desire to retain

in her chains, him, whom she would through perverseness reject, and was angry that she had not been able to secure one of those attachments, at once violent and hopeless, of which she had read so much, and by which the romantic coquettishness of her mind, would have found itself particularly gratified; she was therefore rather concerned than angry, and with great gentleness remonstrated with her cousin on the unreasonable offence she seemed to have taken, assured her that Mr. Southcote had never addressed her, and that in all probability what he had said was merely a finesse which he had used to try if his Clarinthia could be awakened to any return of affection for him, by the apprehension of seeing him prefer another: and she added, that should he be serious, which she did not believe likely, she should give him at once her reasons for declining to hear more of addresses, which she was very willing to allow offered her advantages to which she had no pretensions.

The mildness, humility and sweetness of her answer, together with the idea she had started that Mr. Southcote had used her name
merely

merely to alarm the jealousy and awaken the latent love of his former mistress, appeased the unreasonable and capricious anger of Clarinthia for that time; but when Southcote a few days afterwards actually addressed her, and applied openly to Mr. and Mrs. Ludford for their approbation and interest, all her animosity against the innocent and unhappy Ethelinde was again excited. It was in vain that Ethelinde immediately, yet with great politeness, assured Mr. Southcote that her heart was irrevocably another's, and that in consequence of that assurance he immediately left the house. Confusion and ill humour remained in it, in consequence of this unfortunate overture, which rendered it infinitely more insupportable than ever. Old Ludford, who had hitherto seen Ethelinde with great indifference, now looked upon her with dislike, as having been the means of his Clarinthia losing a match he so highly approved; (for her other entanglement was a secret to him). Mrs. Ludford could not bear that any man should prefer her dependent niece to a daughter whose person resembled her own, whose education she considered as the most exquisite.

that could be given, and who had twenty-thousand pounds. While Clarinthia was humbled, mortified and enraged to be at length convinced, that instead of living single, or what would have been still better, dying for love, Southcote had not only broken her chains for ever, but had seriously intended to marry the indigent Ethelinde.

Severe as these heartburnings were, they were on all parts restrained from breaking forth in absolute rudeness towards the lovely and unhappy being who had excited them, by this consideration, that, if they treated her too harshly, she would quit them before the return of Mrs. Montgomery, and by that means might very probably be thrown in the way of Southcote, and being quite without protection and support be compelled to accept him. This the whole family united in wishing to prevent. The father, because he still hoped while Southcote remained single that the match with Clarinthia might be brought about; the mother, through mere envy and malignity; and Clarinthia, because she was no sooner convinced that he had really conquered his former affection, than she

she felt an invincible desire to engage him again in a passion for her, that she might then sacrifice him to another, as the completest triumph she could enjoy over her too lovely cousin, and her faithless admirer. Such were the politics at Ludford House, which saved Ethelinde from being driven out of it by such rudeness and insult as all her native gentleness, added to her wishes of obeying Sir Edward as far as she could, would not have enabled her to have borne. It had however some good effects: Clarinthia now no longer persecuted her with violent friendship or troublesome confidences; Mrs. Ludford no longer insisted on her appearing, whatever company were present; but she was suffered with very little notice to pass the greater part of her time either in her own room or the gardens, and to employ herself in writing, drawing or work, without enquiry or remark. Thus, with less actual misery than in the former part of her residence with her aunt, three weeks passed. Rupert was little at home; and when he was, he no longer seemed to consider her as worth the fatigue he should incur by being polite to her; but treated

her

her with a kind of indolent contempt, as a girl to whom he could undoubtedly become acceptable, whenever he chose to give himself the trouble.

Ethelinde had now been seven weeks with the Ludfords, and except the letter she had received from Sir Edward, had in all that time heard nothing of any of those friends on whom her thoughts perpetually dwelt. Chesterville had now been gone long enough to allow her to expect to hear from him; he had promised to write from the Madeiras, but no letter had arrived; and Mrs. Montgomery had not written, though Ethelinde had acquainted her with her change of situation, and had told her without reserve all the reasons she had to be more than ever solicitous for her return. Of Montgomery himself it was not yet possible for her to have any intelligence—but,

“ Her fancy follow’d him through foaming waves

“ To distant shores; and she would sit and weep.

“ At what a failor suffers.”

And oftener in beholding the luxurious and useless follies in which Rupert Ludford more than ever indulged himself, she would painfully

fully

fully reflect on the strange disposition of the goods of fortune, which, while they enabled such a being as her little conceited cousin to enjoy all the real or artificial pleasures which wanton wealth has to bestow, were so totally denied to the nobly born and nobly minded Montgomery; that with all his merit, all his advantages of understanding, figure and birth, he was compelled to seek even an uncertain and precarious support by quitting Europe, and becoming in an unwholesome climate, and amid continual hazard, a candidate for a small portion of Asiatic wealth, which, after all, he might not obtain. The oftener she made this mortifying comparison the more her spirits and her hopes were depressed: yet, with all her remaining strength of mind, she endeavoured to look forward to a day of retribution even in this world; and consoled by the recollection of his worth and goodness, and of her own adherence to her duty throughout her hitherto unhappy life, she tried to acquire fortitude to bear present evils, from her reliance on the final though long delayed justice of Heaven.

CHAPTER VI.

THE family of Ludford had been accustomed to pass part of every summer at Southampton, and as the young man to whom Miss Clarinthia believed herself attached was quartered in that neighbourhood, she was extremely eager that they might go thither earlier in the year than they had usually done. Nothing was easier than to affect a nervous complaint. Her father was as fond of her as his nature permitted him to be of any thing, and readily assented to her wishes. Mrs. Ludford too, who loved to shew herself and her coach and four where they attracted more observation, as novelties, than they could possibly find in the neighbourhood of Ludford House, was not less condescending to the desires of her daughter. They all would have been willing to have left Ethelinde behind them: but as that would have been hazardous on account of Southcote, whose West India connections brought him frequently to Bristol, it was

was determined that she should go with them. But Clarinthia, whose natural good humour was lost in her insatiable desire to monopolize admiration, now no longer prest her to go to public places; but Ethelinde contented herself, after a slight invitation which she invariably refused, to walk, read or otherwise divert herself; while her cousin, either on horseback in a morning or at parties in the evening, had opportunities to carry on her clandestine love, without being suspected either by her father or her mother.

The situation of Ethelinde therefore was very little changed by this removal to a place of public resort. But every week and every day that passed encreased the uneasiness and anxiety with which she thought of the long protracted return of Mrs. Montgomery, from whom she received not even a letter, to relieve her mind from any part of this tormenting suspense.

A thousand uneasy conjectures now distressed her: sometimes she fancied she was ill in France, or that the world no longer boasted of one of its brightest ornaments; and sometimes she supposed that since her affairs were
only

only more embarrassed, she forbore to write what could give only pain to her already unhappy correspondent. But every supposition by which Ethelinde could account for her silence was unsatisfactory; and the more she attempted to investigate its cause, the more reason she found to be disturbed and alarmed.

Time, however, heavily passed on; the end of June arrived; the place was filled with a crowd of company, all eager for amusement. But Ethelinde, who had no delight in what attracted them, and who saw herself considered only as a dependent on the Ludfords, lived more than ever alone. In her solitary and pensive walks, which generally lay towards the pleasant common across which the road goes to the town, she had frequently been overtaken or met by a gentleman who appeared to be in a very ill state of health, and to be oppressed with melancholy as deep as her own: he was as well as herself in mourning, and ill health or sorrow, rather than time, had given an appearance of infirmity to a manly and graceful figure, and of fallowness and languor to fine features and expressive eyes. He had frequently gazed on Ethelinde with
an

an earnestness that from any other person would have distressed if it did not alarm her; but there was something in the look and manner of this stranger which excited her confidence rather than her fear; she fancied that there was in his face a great resemblance to features always present to her mind—to those of Montgomery; yet she knew that he had no father living, nor any very near relation; and she checked this idea as being merely a chimera, formed by her imagination on some slight similitude, hardly perceivable by another. They had thus met several times: the stranger, though he always seemed disposed to speak, had hitherto contented himself with bowing as he passed her, and sometimes when he thought she did not perceive him, turning to look after her, till she was no longer within his view. Ethelinde, though she fancied he was unhappy, and was involuntarily interested for him for that reason, and because of his imaginary likeness to Montgomery, could not speak first.

It happened however, that early one morning she went muffled up in a great cap and long cloak, to get from the library the second

volume

volume of a book she was reading; the stranger whom she had so often observed, sat reading in a corner so intent on his book that he perceived her not; but when she asked the person who waited to serve her for the book she wanted, and heard it was not at home, she expressed her disappointment, and at the sound of her voice the stranger looked up and took not his eyes from her while she remained in the shop; when she had left it, he enquired of the bookseller who she was?

“ I really cannot inform you, Sir : she is I think a sort of companion to some ladies of great fortune from Bristol, who come here every year.”

“ And her name ? ”

“ There Sir,” said the master of the shop, shewing her name in his subscription book—

“ That is her name, written by herself.”

“ Chesterville ! ” exclaimed the stranger—
 “ Good God ! and can you tell me to what family of that name she belongs, what relations she has, and for whom she is in mourning ? and whether she is married, or a widow ?—yet, she is so young—surely—I wish I knew.
 The man pretending himself incapable of an-
 swering

fowering all these enquires, the stranger in great apparent anxiety went forth to make them elsewhere; but he could not describe Ethelinde otherwise, than as a tall young lady in mourning, who was generally with Mrs. Ludford. Mrs. Ludford and her daughter were perfectly well known by the various tradesmen to whom he applied for information, but the young lady in mourning had either never been at their shops, or having laid out no money there, had passed unnoticed: no intelligence could therefore be gained; and Ethelinde, who intended the first time she had an opportunity to ask at the library who the stranger was, went for her evening walk alone as usual, quite unconscious of the tumultuous anxiety which the knowledge of her name had occasioned. The evening was warm, and she had left the house sooner than usual to avoid the racket and confusion of the universal dressing for a ball, in which every body but herself were engaged. She had been disappointed of the second volume of the book she had begun, which was the beautiful and pathetic *Julia de Roubigné*, but she had taken another simple and natural story, *Fatal Obedience*, or

the

the History of Mr. Freeland; and having found a seat on the grass, in the shade formed by one of the clumps of firs planted on the common, she had escaped a moment from her own unhappiness, and was absorbed by her concern for the lovely unfortunate Gertrude, when her attention was suddenly called off, by the hasty approach of the stranger she had so often seen. He pulled off his hat, but seemed breathless and confused: "Will you, Madam," said he inarticulately, "will you forgive this rude intrusion from a man deeply interested in the question which he hopes you will allow him to ask?"

Ethelinde, though somewhat alarmed and surprized by such an address, arose hastily, and with her usual ease and sweetness replied, though not without some appearance of confusion, "that she should consider herself much honoured by his commands."

"Your name, Madam, I am informed, is Chesterville. May I enquire whether it is your family name?—or—" he stopped and hesitated, and Ethelinde took that opportunity to reply.

"Certainly, Sir, it is the name of my family."

"Be

“ Be so good then, Madam, as to tell me— have you brothers, and are any of them married ?”

“ I have, Sir, one brother, who is married.”

“ And—pray pardon my curiosity—you will I am sure, when I tell you from what it arises— whom did he marry ?”

“ A native of Spain, who was however the daughter of an English gentleman.”

“ Gracious God!—I thank thee!” exclaimed the stranger with clasped hands, and a countenance strongly expressive of emotion, —“ I have then some traces of my lost Victo- rine :—dearest young lady, by your counte- nance, a countenance which the moment I be- held it became most interesting to my heart; you I am sure will pardon and pity the anx- iety of a father who seeks his only remaining child, and whose troubled mind is haunted by remorse and anguish when he persuades him- self, that for having too long abandoned *her*, avenging heaven has robbed him of the rest.”

Ethelinde, amazed as she was, had yet presence of mind enough left to attempt ap- peasing the excessive agitation of Mr. Har- court; whom she now clearly perceived in the
interesting

interesting stranger. She besought him to be more tranquil, for he appeared ready to faint, and to forbear any farther conversation till he could speak with less pain.

“Lovely, considerate creature!” cried he, gazing on her with eyes which now filled with tears—“I will endeavour to recover myself.—Yet one question more.—Where is my Victorine?—When can I press her to this throbbing heart, and implore her pardon for my cruel, my unnatural neglect.”

Had Ethelinde seen a stranger under such evident distress she would have been much affected, but when she considered Mr. Harcourt as the uncle of Montgomery, the brother of his beloved mother, and the father of Victorine, she forgot that she had never before spoken to him, and felt as if she was herself his daughter. When therefore the violent and encreasing agitation of his spirits seemed to convulse his whole frame, she intreated him to lean on her arm, and to hasten home before he made any farther efforts to acquaint himself with circumstances that might give him pain.—“I have met with an angel,” cried Harcourt, “who seems sent by
Heaven

Heaven to speak peace to my soul.—I will endeavour to follow your advice, lovely Mits Chesterville, because I will neither terrify nor trouble you.—Tell me only where my daughter is, and I will suppress as much as I can every other emotion but gratitude to providence which has preserved, and will restore her.”

He then, collecting all his strength, walked, but with slow and faltering steps, towards the town; and after a moment acquired courage to renew the question he had asked, of where Victorine then was?

Ethelinde found it necessary immediately to satisfy him; and therefore, tho' with difficulty and in a low voice, she related without disguising any part of the truth, the situation of her brother when he returned from Gibraltar; and the consequences of his return. But when she came to that part of her narration where it was necessary to mention the death of her father, the sad and tender recollections that crowded on her memory, choaked her utterance; and, unable to proceed, she was compelled to accept from Mr. Harcourt that support which she had a moment before offered him. “Do

“Do not,” cried he, much affected by her distress—“do not I beseech you gratify my anxious enquiries at this expence to yourself; let us wave a conversation too affecting to us both till we are better able to bear it.—Where are you?—May I be allowed to wait on you home?”

Ethelinde, believing that the Ludford family, if not already departed to the ball, were too much engaged to be very inquisitive after her visitor, and knowing that the dining parlour was at that hour usually vacant, ventured to invite thither her new acquaintance. As soon as he was seated she went herself to fetch him refreshment, which he appeared so much to need; and having taken it, he seemed to have got over the tremor and faintness which had so much alarmed her. In a few moments he became still more tranquil; and Ethelinde finished, in as few words as she could, the little history of those embarrassments which had made it necessary for Chesterville and his wife to depart for the West-Indies; which they were only enabled to do by the generous and disinterested friendship of Sir Edward Newenden.

Mr. Harcourt

Mr. Harcourt severely blamed himself for his neglect: "Oh my poor deserted child," cried he, tears again filling his eyes—"to what difficulties was not your infancy exposed, what must you have thought when you were old enough to think of your father? and now, when the rigid but just hand of destiny has by severe chastisement awakened him to a sense of his neglected duties, he finds you gone in search of *him* who ought to have protected and provided for you: and if he is not already sufficiently punished, thy innocent life may perhaps be demanded to fill up the measure of vengeance.

Ethelinde now again endeavoured to console and reassure him on the fate of Victorine. He heard her with attention and gratitude; and when she ceased speaking, he said, with a deep sigh, — "you are very good thus to endeavour to reconcile me to myself; had I indeed been quite forgetful of my poor Victorine, nothing I think could quiet the reproaches of my own heart: but though I did not enough, I made many, but successful enquiries, both of the person who succeeded to her grandfather's property, and in Spain, I

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could gain no intelligence of her; and as I proposed this year to come to England for the rest of my life, I then hoped to trace her out by the indefatigable research, which I intended in person to make. Alas! he who had the greatest influence in bringing me to the resolution I formed of quitting Jamaica—my son! he for whom alone I enjoyed in imagination the purchases I had made in England, and the great affluence which I possess, is gone! To that very affluence which enabled him to indulge without restraint his passion for pleasure and dissipation, he fell a martyr in his nineteenth year: and if I have lost Victorine, I am without a child to inherit what I shall leave, when I follow him, as I shall soon do, to the grave!”

Ethelinde could answer nothing: and Mr. Harcourt, after a moment, in which the remembrance of his son deprived him of the power of utterance, thus proceeded—

“ At the age of forty I return to England; which, though I was born in France, I consider as my native country. I return, but as a stranger and an alien, without a certainty of finding one person who may be interested for
me,

me, who may be induced by the tender ties of blood to render the rest of my life easy. I had a sister—but I have not heard from her these many months; and buried in obscurity as she was, the letters and the remittances I lately sent to her, may never have reached her or her son, whom, if he still lives, I shall consider as my own.”

The emotion of Ethelinde now exceeded all description; to find, that if Montgomery had remained a few weeks only in England, the arrival of his uncle would have rendered his voyage unnecessary; to reflect on all the sufferings which a little patience would have spared them, and that now he was out of the reach of his benefactor and might never return to enjoy the prosperity which awaited him, quite overwhelmed her. Harcourt imagined that she was merely affected by pity for him; or by the interest which her brother's relationship to him gave her in his narrative; while she was endeavouring to acquire voice to tell him where his sister and his nephew were, he thus went on—

“It is now two years since my poor boy returned to me from England, where he had

been educated at a public school.—I soon after received intelligence of his sister's death, who had gone the year before with her husband to England; and my son became doubly precious to me. He was, in figure, in temper, and in accomplishments, every thing a fond father could wish: but his vivacity was boundless: he was gay, animated and generous to an excess; and Jamaica, a residence which long habit and great property had rendered pleasant to me, was too confined a scene for his volatile spirit; he easily persuaded me to do what would be agreeable to him, and he obtained from me a commission to make considerable purchases in England, and I agreed to dispose of all my West India estates, except two, which were not only the most certain in their produce, but the most easily managed in the absence of their proprietor. After about three months stay he went back to Europe, and laid out the money with which I had entrusted him, to great advantage in a western country. Having settled every thing to his wish, he wrote to me to say, that as he knew it must be many months before I could settle my affairs and quit Jamaica, he proposed

proposed employing the intermediate time in making the tour of Europe. I had letters from him from time to time from the different Italian towns he visited, and looked forward to the period which now approached, when we should meet in England to live together like friends; for as his friend I had always taught my son to consider me. Such were my hopes—ah! vain and fallacious hopes!—It is now four months since, having arranged all my affairs so as to quit the West Indies for ever, I waited at Kingston to embark on board a merchant man which I had freighted with such of my effects as remained to be transported to Europe: a ship came in from England; it belonged to the merchant to whom the produce of my estates were usually consigned; eagerly and impatiently I expected the first boat which came on shore, and which I hoped brought me a packet from my son, who transmitted his letters by means of my correspondent in London. Judge of the feelings of a father, who, instead of tidings of the health and happiness of a son so beloved, saw that son himself, arrive on shore, not such as he left me, in all the pride of youth

youth and health, but emaciated, pale, and to all appearance in the last stage of a consumption; unable to walk, he was borne from the boat in the arms of the negroes, who would have put him into mine—but speechless with grief and amazement, I stood heartstruck and immoveable, while they placed the sort of litter in which he had been brought, before me. Exhausted with the fatigue of being removed from the ship, my poor boy could not for a moment speak to me.—Oh! God! the altered, but still pleasing countenance which he turned towards me in that moment of speechless agony, is ever present to my mind—sleeping or waking, I see before me the faint smile which sat on those pale lips and sunken cheeks. When having recovered a little breath he took my hand, and said in a hollow and tremulous voice: ‘My father, I obtain my wishes, and am come to die in your arms.’

“Somebody, I know not who, who possessed their senses, which I did not, directed us both to be conveyed to the house of an intimate friend, where every thing was done for my son that was supposed likely to be useful to him, and where after a few hours, of which

I have

I have no recollection, my friend prevailed upon me to listen to the Mulatto servant who had accompanied my son, and from whose relation it was possible we might learn what had occasioned this fatal change, and from thence know what remedy might with hopes of success be applied.

“Remedy I too well knew there was none—but in the fullen hopelessness of despair, I listened to the account Carlos gave of his master: he said, that he got into parties whose whole business was pleasure, and that he had several times been confined with dangerous fevers in consequence of these excesses, and that his general state of health was extremely hurt—that Carlos had often ventured to remonstrate with him, but in vain; his volatility made him turn his advice, as well as that of some friends who saw his constitution gradually giving way, into ridicule; and, when he was told the consequence of this wild career, he answered, that if he could not enjoy life like a man of spirit, he had rather not keep it.

“At length he was seized at Marseilles with an ardent fever, which left him in a state of almost infantine weakness; Carlos took that

opportunity of introducing a Physician travelling with an English family, who advised his immediately returning by sea to England, as the only chance of conquering the ill effects of his past indiscretions, and removing him from scenes where he was too likely to commit others when he recovered. To England he returned; but the mischief was done; his ruined constitution nothing could restore; he remained a few weeks with my correspondent, who treated him like a son, and had the best advice for him: but it was evident to all the Physicians who were consulted, that nothing could save him. He felt it by that time himself, and felt it without any other mixture of regret, than what arose from his knowledge of the pain it might give me.

“ His wishes to see me once again, made him press them to tell him whether it was probable that he might live till my arrival in England, which I had fixed to be at the end of five months from that time. They owned that they feared not. He then, with that vivacity which had not yet forsaken him, determined to hire a ship and come to me: and with a firmness of mind very extraordinary in

in so young a man, he ordered on board a leaden coffin, and necessaries to preserve his remains if he should die on the voyage, that they might be interred with those of his mother.

“ Neither my friend in London or the medicinal people whom he had summoned, could prevail upon him to relinquish this project. The latter indeed, seeing him so resolute, soon ceased to oppose it; and though there remained hardly any hope of his recovery, it was barely possible that the voyage to his native climate might be of more use than medicines. But his decline, though slow, was yet too perceivable during the voyage; and when Carlos concluded his narrative, I was but too much confirmed in the sad conviction that a few hours, or at the most a few days, would consign my only hope to a premature grave.

“ Dreadful as was this certainty, the remonstrances of my friend restored to me resolution enough to attend him while he yet lived; I stifled the anguish of my heart, I affected to entertain hopes, and tried to speak cheerful; but the dear departing being, who had, with all his volatility, more fortitude

than his unhappy father, besought me not to deceive myself. 'I die, dear sir,' cried he, as he held my hand, 'and die perfectly easy, if you have but forgiven me for the pain I have occasioned to the best father that ever man had! Think not of my loss with such bitterness; perhaps it is better for us both; my days have hitherto, through your goodness, been all pleasant ones; I have enjoyed every moment of my life, though it has been short; a long life equally fortunate I could not expect, and by quitting it now, I perhaps escape from many sorrows and calamities, while I have nothing to regret on earth but leaving you.' I affect you, dearest Miss Chesterville, too much; forgive me! I have a mournful, a severe delight in dwelling on the last scene of a life so dear to me, and with how few do I dare indulge the sad luxury of speaking of it."

A silence of a few moments now intervened, which was broken only by the convulsive sobs of Mr. Harcourt and the deep sighs of Ethelinde. The former then continued,—“Let me hasten to close a relation that is, I see, too distressing to your tender bosom.

bosom. A few hours before he closed his eyes for ever, I was placed by the chair where he sat, being unable to breathe in a bed; he looked at me a moment earnestly, and then said, as well as his extreme weakness permitted, 'My dear sir, there is yet one thing on which I wish you to listen to me. I have often heard you mention with regret the daughter born to you in Spain, and have often lamented the little success of your endeavours to discover her. When the fever which has been attended with these tedious consequences seized me at Marseilles, I was meditating a journey to Barcelona, where I intended to have made personal enquiries for my sister, and dare venture to believe I should have succeeded, for by means of a merchant at Marseilles, I had already procured intelligence of her, though it is not such as I wish at this moment to give you.—Give it me however, cried I.—It is, replied my son, that being obliged to quit the convent where she was brought up, she became a sort of humble companion to the daughters of a merchant, from whom she went away with a young Englishman: to England they imagine, but

they

they refused through resentment of her conduct to give any particulars about her. You will soon, my dear sir, have no other child. I need not I know urge you to seek out and receive this unfortunate sister, wheresoever she may be. She is yet so young that her errors cannot have been numerous; perhaps they were involuntary. May she prove worthy of you, my father, and heal those wounds which I see my loss will inflict. Let her and that nephew of whom you have so often spoken, and whom, while I was a school boy; I used to love though I saw so little of him; let them together share the princely fortune you possess; unless, as you are yet but in the middle of life, a second marriage should give you other sons, more deserving of your tenderness than I have been.'—There was something so affecting in the firmness with which so young a man contemplated his approaching dissolution, and looked back to the world only to find future comforts for the only person who made him wish to live, that had he not been my child, this conversation would have been insupportably distressing.—Think then, of what I suffered!—I remember only, that I
promised

promised my poor boy never to rest till I had found the dear deserted girl whom he so generously recommended to my care; and then the thoughts of all I was on the point of losing, and the impossibility that any thing could make me amends for the cruel stroke which levelled all my fond hopes with the dust, robbed me for a while of the painful consciousness of my misery; I fell from wild and frantic exclamation into a stupor, from which when I recovered it was only to relapse again into distracted ravings. The interval lasted but till I heard and understood that my son was gone for ever. I will say nothing of what became of me afterwards. To the unwearied attention of a friend I owe it, that I yet live. It was this friend, and his wife, one of the best women in the world, who awakened me to a sense of my duty: they taught me resignation by restoring to my mind a sense of that religion I had too much neglected; but even those consolations were embittered by the reflections they brought with them on my past conduct. I regretted, ah how deeply, the little restraint I had ever put on the inclinations of my son. I imputed to my bound-

less indulgence the destruction of all my happiness. I had made him his own master at an age when other boys are still at school, and trusting to the goodness of his understanding and the brilliancy of his faculties, had neglected to give him those principles without which understanding is useless, and brilliant faculties act only as fatal auxiliaries to the headlong passions of youth.

‘ The poor fond parent, humbled in the dust,
 ‘ Now owns in tears, the punishment was just.’

Yet, alas! we do not always bear best the calamities to which we are ourselves accessory. The reflection, that with a more careful and stricter education, my son might now have been living, happy himself and constituting my happiness, perpetually haunts me, and adds bitterness to the regret I must incessantly feel through life, where not an incident occurs but what reminds me of my irreparable loss. As soon as I was in a condition to undertake the voyage, I embarked, not for England as I originally intended, but for Barcelona, where I employed myself in obeying the last desires of my son, and the dictates of my own sorrowing heart: I there learned, that my
 poor

poor Victorine had left the family who had taken her upon charity, with an English Officer of the name of Chesterville; I had the consolation of believing she set out for England as his wife, and thither I immediately followed them; but illness, the effect of accumulated sorrow and anxiety, detained me for some weeks at Paris; and as soon as the dangerous weakness occasioned by a bilious fever would permit, I came hither from Havre. I wrote immediately to London, to engage various persons in enquiries after my daughter and her husband: and I wrote also to my sister, whose residence is in the North of England. From my first letters I have yet received no satisfactory intelligence; and to the latter, those to my sister and my nephew, I have had no answers at all. — Yet, I will not, I ought not, to yield to that heavy despondence which too frequently threatens to annihilate my courage and my faculties; I will rather consider my fortunately meeting with you, Madam, as an earnest that Heaven accepts my repentance and will restore to me my long lost Victorine. An attraction too powerful to be resisted, seemed to impel me towards you; yet it was not the
loveliness

loveliness of your form, or the sweetness of your countenance, enchanting as they are, that created this fortunate fascination; it was that soft yet deep melancholy which appeared to possess you, and that look which seemed to promise the tenderest pity for the miseries of others; you were always alone—you were in mourning—you were about the age of the daughter I sought—it was even possible you might be that daughter. I clung to an idea so soothing to my sick heart, and mistook perhaps the power of beauty for the force of blood. But however desirous of speaking to you, I was still afraid of alarming, or of offending you; and I know not how long my painful silence would have lasted, had I not learned in the library this morning that your name was Chesterville. New tumults of hope and expectation then seized me; they became too violent to be long endured, and compelled me to follow and to address you: thus commencing, however abruptly, an acquaintance which promises to be the most fortunate I can now make, rendered at present most soothing by the interest you generously take in my sorrows, and promising hereafter to be the means

means of restoring me to all of happiness I can now taste on earth."

"And yet," said Ethelinde, "you know not all of which it is in my power to acquaint you." She then informed him of what she knew relative to Mrs. Montgomery and her son, omitting only the affection which had so long subsisted between Montgomery and herself. Mr. Harcourt heard her with anxious concern. The inconveniencies to which his sister had been, and was still exposed, the involuntary absence of a nephew whom he had the power to render independent, and the uncertainty whether he might now ever return to possess independence, were united to the concern with which he reflected on the situation of his daughter: and such complicated anxiety drew from him tears, of which Ethelinde, who wept with him, could not stop the course; when they were suddenly interrupted by the entrance of Miss Ludford, dressed for the ball. She flounced into the room, and was walking up to the glass which afforded her a survey of her whole person, when she saw not only Ethelinde, whom she would hardly have noticed, but a gentleman with
her.

her. "I beg your pardon," said she. "I did not know, Miss Chesterville, that you had company."

Ethelinde then introduced Mr. Harcourt by his name.—It founded well, and Clarinthia having nothing else to do, deigned to enter into conversation with him, till he, finding himself almost exhausted by the various emotions he had experienced within the last few hours, and seeing it improbable that he should have any farther opportunity of conversation with Ethelinde that night, withdrew to his lodgings, having obtained leave to wait on her again the next day.

CHAP-

CHAPTER VII.

MR. Harcourt had no sooner withdrawn, than Miss Ludford enquired who he was. "He is," replied Ethelinde, "the half brother of Mrs. Montgomery, and the father of Mrs. Chesterville."

"And pray where did you meet him? Lord! it is vastly odd he should come to see you without waiting on papa. He comes, I suppose, from Scotland."

"No, from Jamaica; where he has lately lost an only son; in consequence of which my brother's wife becomes heiress to all his immense fortune."

This was intelligence that could not but be interesting to Mrs. Ludford, who at that moment entered the room, and to whom Clarinthia immediately communicated it. Nothing was to her so mortifying as to suppose that any other family, and still more those branches of her own whom she considered as dependant and impoverished, should be possessed

essed of affluence superior or even equal to that from which she derived her own consequence. Her ample visage glowed with the sudden emotion of surprise and pain this intelligence gave her; and turning haughtily towards Ethelinde, she said—"A great fortune? Truly that's a likely story. Pray, child, is this an invention of the person who has been here, or your own?"

"Neither, Madam," replied Ethelinde with some spirit. "To what end should he invent, or should I repeat a falsehood so ridiculously useless, and so easily detected?"

"It is impossible it should be true, however," returned Mrs. Ludford: "for I am sure if there had been any such man of large fortune in Jamaica, Mr. Ludford must have known him. He that has such great consignments from the Island! Call your father, Clary, I'm determined to know, however."

Ethelinde, the agitation of whose spirits this conversation was ill calculated to soothe and compose, would willingly have escaped from the room; but as she arose to depart, Mr. Ludford waddled into the room; and his wife eagerly put the question to him whether
there

there was any such person as a Mr. Harcourt of very great property in Jamaica ?

“ Aye to be sure there is,” replied he ;
 “ and what then ? ”

Mrs. Ludford, again changing countenance, informed him of what Ethelinde had told her ; and had hardly concluded her account, before the eager desire of accumulating money, the latent but strongest principle in the heavy mind of old Ludford, was suddenly roused—“ Bless my soul,” cried he, rubbing his hands, “ has Mr. Harcourt himself been here ? I wish I had seen him. His consignments are very considerable—I wish I could have paid my respects to him. His consignments, I know, are very capital indeed—very capital—and not a shilling advance ever expected from his merchant. I heartily wish, my dear, you had called me down.”

“ Lord, papa,” said Clarinthia, “ what signifies his consignments ; I am sure you have business enough ; and for my part I wish you’d have done with it quite, instead of flaving always for more money. Come now don’t let us stay talking about such things, I desire of you ;
 but

but let us go to the rooms. The coach has been waiting this half hour."

Ludford had now Harcourt's consignments, and the probability of his getting them transferred to his own house, so strong in his head, that instead of complying with the wishes of Miss Clarinthia, or attending to her impatience, he was meditating how to insinuate himself immediately into the favor of the rich planter.—“Suppose, love,” said he, addressing himself to his wife, (who sat fanning herself, half out of breath at the prospect of the hitherto indigent Ethelinde and her brother being raised to affluence by this newly discovered relation)—“Suppose, love, we send a complaisant card, and invite Mr. Harcourt to dinner to-morrow. It will be but common civility, you know, and I dare say he will take it kind. Bless me, I wonder I never heard of his landing—I wonder what ship he came in; but we will invite him to dinner, Dolly—shall we?”

“With all my heart, Mr. Ludford,” said the lady indignantly, “with all my heart, if you mean as one gentleman to another out of hospitality; but I hope you don't think of cringing

cringing to him for consignments. I bless God, you are now in a *situation* not to need any such proceeding; and I am sure my son Rupert would not approve of your letting yourself down to ask favours of the King himself."

"Not ask favours?" cried Ludford, whose pride yielded to his avarice. "I am sure your son Rupert spends money fast enough; and he ought not to be above any honest means of getting it. Besides I've always wished for the consignments of that estate; they're the best on the Island; and if I could get them, more sugars would be entered at the port of Bristol, consigned to Ludford and Company, than there is for Grubworth, Grinder, Still, Manchineel and Company; and let me tell you, Dolly, that is a thing not to be despis^d."

Ethelinde now silently withdrew to her room, leaving them to settle this matter as they would. The dialogue had, however, forcibly brought to her mind the speech which her brother just before his departure made on the attention he should meet with from the Ludford's when he obtained a share of Harcourt's fortune; and she could not but reflect with
thankfulness

thankfulness on the certainty there now was that her brother was not only secure of affluence, but would be enabled to discharge his pecuniary obligations to Sir Edward; and that Mrs. Montgomery had no longer any occasion to remain in France waiting the precarious issue of a law suit; but then the uncertainty whether either Chesterville or Montgomery might ever return to enjoy the fortune which now awaited them, struck cold on her heart, and destroyed all the agreeable visions which her late acquired friend had raised in her mind. A thousand projects now suggested themselves to her; but they all ended in the painful conviction that she could do nothing to expedite the return of her brother and her lover, except writing to every place where it was possible letters might reach them; and on that subject, as well as on sending a messenger to Lyons, at which Mr. Harcourt had hinted the evening before, she determined to consult him the next morning, when he had engaged her to meet him early on their usual walk. So various were the emotions that this sudden change of fortune had given rise to in the mind of Ethelinde, that she could not sleep; but at
the

the dawn of day was dressed, and waiting with impatience for the hour of rendezvous. Before its arrival, however, Ethelinde, to her infinite satisfaction, received (forwarded from Brackwood, from whence it had been long in its passage) a letter from Mrs. Montgomery, informing her that hopeless of a speedy determination of her law-suit, and uneasy at the situation of her beloved Ethelinde, which, from the two letters she had received from her, was, she found, far from pleasant, she had determined to hasten to England; and desired her to prepare, in pursuance of the wishes and parting injunctions of their mutually dear Montgomery, for entire sequestration at Grafmere.

With this welcome letter in her hand, Ethelinde hastened to meet Mr. Harcourt. She found him apparently in weaker health than the day before; but the sight of his sister's hand seemed to revive him.—“I have not then lost every thing,” said he. “After an absence of so many years, I shall embrace my Caroline, and enjoy at least the satisfaction of placing her above the inconveniences she has too long so nobly struggled with. Let us,

loveliest Miss Chesterville, let us consider this as the omen of our future good fortune, and let us soothe our otherwise insupportable anxiety by the hope that Victorine, Montgomery, and Chesterville, will before many months are elapsed—” He paused a moment, sighed, and then in a lower voice said—“ Ah! dreamer that I am! Thus it was that I fondly, anxiously watched the return of him, who did indeed return, not as my sanguine expectation painted him, but to have his premature grave watered by the tears of a father, who can now never expect happiness! Should my daughter, should my nephew, be destined so to meet me! Pardon me, dearest Miss Chesterville,” continued he, seeing Ethelinde extremely affected by this dreadful idea—“ pardon me, I ought not, I know, to sink my own spirits, or disturb your’s by images so painful; but I have suffered so much—my nerves are so shaken, that they intrude upon me in spite of myself. I have been long a lonely and unhappy wanderer, and have fancied myself a being to whom nobody would attend but through mercenary motives, nobody listen, but in hopes of some advantage from the calamities

ties I deplored, and now, when I have found in your gentle pity a balm for my wounded spirit, I seem to find relief from communicating the terrors which in spite of reason still haunt me."

Ethelinde, who, from the excess of her tenderness for Montgomery, was easily alarmed, felt that these terrifying apprehensions were indeed communicated most painfully to her anxious bosom; but she endeavoured to conceal the effect they had upon her, and to speak cheerfully. She succeeded so well as to turn Mr. Harcourt's mind again towards his sister; and on consulting the date of her letter, they found that she was probably already in London, or would be there in a very few days.

The impatience with which they both desired to accelerate a meeting so long wished for, made them equally averse to the delay which must be created by Mr. Harcourt's accepting the invitation to dinner, so officiously made by Mr. Ludford; but on reflection, Ethelinde considered that her going with Mr. Harcourt, to whom she was almost a stranger, to Mrs. Montgomery's lodgings, where she might not yet be arrived, would be imprudent

and that it would be better only to write thither, and to wait till they heard from Mrs. Montgomery, before they left Southampton. In the mean time, Mr. Harcourt, with whatever reluctance, determined to accept the politeness of Mr. Ludford. The sordid soul of the money-loving trader, never more evidently appeared than in the behaviour of Mr. Ludford towards his newly made acquaintance, whom he treated with fatiguing and fawning civility; as well as towards Ethelinde, with whom he had till now hardly exchanged ten words since she became resident in his house. He now affected to call her his niece; while Mrs. Ludford, not able to conquer the envy and malignity of her narrow and selfish heart, could no farther command herself than to refrain from treating Ethelinde with her usual haughty asperity. Still, however, she affected for her contemptuous pity, more difficult either to be borne or repelled than actual rudeness. She spoke to her with that kind of forced condescension with which the rich and prosperous frequently chuse, under the semblance of goodness, to insult those who, having been once equal or superior, are by some caprice of fortune thrown accidentally
below

below them in pecuniary circumstances. Mr. Harcourt, who was exactly that kind of man to whose lively sensibility, and generous attention to the feelings of another, such behaviour was calculated to disgust and even render uneasy, grew towards the hour of tea extremely restless. The whole day had been to him a day of tortures: but they were not yet at an end: Miss Clarinthia had somehow contrived to introduce a long sentimental discourse on friendship and fine feelings, which at length her mother thus interrupted, Ethe-
 linde having for a moment left the room.

“Yes, Clarinthia, my dear; you have indeed very excellent notions of friendship. I bless God I have always brought you up not to consider so much the difference of people’s stations as their merit: and your regard for my niece, poor thing, is a proof of it. It were to be wished indeed poor Ethy had been more lucky in the world: however, providence you see, Mr. Harcourt, has raised her up friends, and I hope, poor thing, she will do well.”

To Harcourt, this canting jargon would have been altogether unintelligible, had he

not understood from Ethelinde the situation in which her father died, and from his observation on the manners of the family she was now with, conceived the utmost dislike to them, and regret that she was compelled a moment longer to be obliged to them.

When Mrs. Ludford, therefore, concluded her last speech, all his complaisance prevented him not from casting on her a look of mingled disdain and anger.—“ You hope Miss Chesterville will do well, Madam? doubt it not. If the most exalted, the most unaffected merit, entitles it's possessor to good fortune, who has so just a claim? On the caprice of fortune, however, she will now no longer depend: for her brother will have property which will enable him to secure to her such a provision as she deserves, and till his arrival it shall be my care that she feel none of the inconveniencies to which she has hitherto I fear been too much exposed.”

“ If Ethelinde has complained of her *fistion*, Sir,” said Mrs. Ludford, colouring, “ she is, I must say, very ungrateful. I have treated her like my own child, though she knows very well that she never would accept my invitation

invitation while any other of her relations would receive her. I overlooked it because she was my niece, and an orphan, poor thing; but otherwise it must be owned that it was rather grating to think that my own sister's daughter should prefer other people. For my part, Mr. Harcourt, I am sure I would not say a word for the world to prejudice you against her. No, very far from it; but this I must say——”

Ill health, misfortune, and a long habit of seeing all around him obedient to his commands, had given to the temper of Harcourt a degree of asperity and impatience, when people he disliked thwarted or fatigued him, and he now could not forbear interrupting the eloquent harangue, by which Mrs. Ludford seemed disposed to display her own goodness, with——“ Dear Madam, excuse me; I *can* hear nothing that can prejudice me against Miss Chesterville; my opinion of her is fixed for ever. It is very possible that you have been very kind to her; but allow me to say, that in my mind you derive more honor from such a niece than from any other circumstance either of situation or fortune. A stranger

cannot behold her with indifference. What then ought to be the effect of such perfection on the hearts of those who are so happy as to be her relations."

This speech silenced the two ladies for a moment, while they tried to conquer the spleen it excited; and Harcourt, dreading the arrival of Ludford and his son, who were summoned to tea, took the opportunity afforded by this interval to rise, and wishing them a good night, he hastened away.

"There!" cried the elder lady, as soon as he was gone; "there! This is the return I get for my generosity. Proud of *her* indeed! Yes to be sure; I wonder for what?"

"Of her beauty, Mama," cried Clarinthia, with a laugh forced to conceal a disposition to cry. "Don't you see that her beauty is the thing. Mr. Harcourt, dismal and deplorable as he is, is not so old but what Miss has known how to throw out her love for him. If she had not been a beauty, we should have heard neither his fine praises nor his fine promises."

"What do you mean," exclaimed Mrs. Ludford, "You don't suppose surely that Mr. Harcourt

Harcourt would marry such a girl as Ethy. Besides is she not engaged to that fellow, that young Scotchman that is gone on a wildgoose chase to *Ingee*?"

"Well, what signifies that. He may never come back, you know, or if he does, his complaining will signify nothing when his uncle has carried away his fair one. Oh! you don't know, Mama, indeed you don't, the deceit some people are capable of. I am sure I had once a very different opinion of Ethelinde, but some late circumstances have convinced me that the sympathetic tenderness of my own heart has again deceived me. Yet I wish her well, I am sure; and if she does marry this rich West Indian, I heartily hope she will be very happy."

"She shall not, I am determined she shall not marry Mr. Harcourt. Am I not her nearest relation? and shall I suffer such a thing? no—I take care."

"Well; but, dear Ma'am, consider Sir Edward Newenden only has power over her. He is her guardian; and if you suspect any such thing had you not better write to him."

He is much belied, you know, if he has not some interest in keeping her single."

While these ladies were thus canvassing the future possible advantages of Ethelinde, and wishing to counteract them, she was writing the letters which had been agreed upon between her and Mr. Harcourt to Montgomery and her brother; and sending forth impatient wishes for the return of Mrs. Montgomery. Three or four days, however, wore away, before the welcome letter arrived which informed her that she was in London, and anxiously expected her lovely young friend to join her there, and accompany her to Grafmere.

Mr. Harcourt and Ethelinde now lost not a moment in preparing for their departure; while Mrs. Ludford, mingling the bitterest sarcasms with affected kindness, was compelled to see her niece withdrawn from her ostentatious protection, and Clarinthia felt at once relieved by the absence of one whose superior attractions threatened a diminution of that admiration she desired to monopolize, and mortified by believing that her hitherto indigent and dependent cousin would be enabled

bled to move in a sphere superior even to her own.

Ethelinde took leave of them with her usual sweetness, and thanked them with as much grateful sensibility as if she had never had reason to complain of their reluctant and sometimes insulting good offices. Harcourt was much relieved by the certainty of his sister's safe arrival; and though he was still languid and low, the tears which he shed were those which the warmth of reviving hope draws from an heart that has long felt only the cold apathy of torpid despair.

Their journey was rapidly performed; but a few miles before they reached London, Ethelinde concerted with her fellow traveller a little plan to prevent Mrs. Montgomery's being too much surpris'd by the sight of a brother from whom she had been so many years divided.

On their arrival in Portland street, as it was summer, and not more than six o'clock, Mrs. Montgomery, who expected Ethelinde with impatient solicitude, came down herself to the door on hearing the chaise stop. Ethelinde, springing out, was immediately in her arms,
and

and they went together into the parlour, where she endeavoured to recover her emotion enough to announce Mr. Harcourt without doing it abruptly; but the pale and altered figure of her friend, the faded yet interesting likeness to that face ever strongly present to her imagination, had struck her with a variety of sensations so painful, that she was entirely without power to do it; and Mrs. Montgomery perceiving something unusual in her manner, was alarmed by an idea, ever too forward to present itself to her anxious heart, that some unfavourable accounts had been received of the vessel in which Montgomery was embarked. “You know nothing of Charles?” said she, fixing her penetrating eyes on those of Ethelinde with a look of uneasy enquiry—“Have accounts been received of the ship’s touching at Madeira? Have any accounts come——” She stopped, as if hardly daring to ask more. “Alas! no!” replied Ethelinde, who caught her alarm instantly; “why do you ask? Surely you have heard nothing? Has there been any report of——”

“I hope

“ I hope not,” replied Mrs. Montgomery; “ but I thought by your looks that you had something to relate. I am too easily alarmed. God knows how I, who cannot a moment take my thoughts from my son, shall be able to endure the long long exile to which he is condemned. Ah ! Ethelinde ! should he do otherwise than well, how shall I regret having consented to, and even advised his voyage. I feel however that if that should happen, my anguish, though it must last to the end of my life, will be of very short continuance.” Overwhelmed by tenderness and sorrow, Mrs. Montgomery now gave way to a flood of tears : but Ethelinde, while she accompanied her, acquired courage to say—“ My dear Madam, you guessed truly that I had something to relate ; but my intelligence is such as to give you only pleasure.”

“ Relates it to my son then ?”

“ Not immediately to him : but you have other relations—other friends—of whose health and arrival in England you would certainly rejoice to hear.”

“ Other

“ Other relations ! Alas no ! I *had* indeed a brother ; but it is now long since I heard from him. He is, if not dead, lost to me. Another climate, other connections, a different mode of life, have obliterated from his mind the memory of his country, and that affection for his sister which he never had : indeed many opportunities of indulging.”

Ethelinde then informed her that the brother whom she supposed had forgotten her, was at that moment waiting impatiently at her door. The joy and surprise of this intelligence almost deprived Mrs. Montgomery of her recollection : nor were the feeble spirits of Mr. Harcourt less agitated in embracing a sister whom he had not seen for so many years. As soon as they became a little more composed, Harcourt would have entered on his own melancholy history and have spoken of his son ;—a subject from which his thoughts were never long detached. But Ethelinde, who knew how ill he could sustain the recollection of circumstances so painful, and how distressing the recital would be to the harrassed mind of Mrs. Montgomery, prevailed

prevailed upon him to leave it to her to inform his sister of all those particulars of which she was ignorant : and at length saw them separate for the night with more composure than she had supposed they could have known after the tumultuous and painful pleasure of a meeting so unexpected.

CHAP-

CHAPTER VIII.

EARLY the next morning Ethelinde attending at the bed side of Mrs. Montgomery, related to her the circumstances by which Mr. Harcourt became deprived of his children, and fought in Victorine and Montgomery heirs to his immense possessions. The tears which the distress of her brother drew from her, were mingled with those of the deepest regret for the departure of her son; which she now accused herself of having rashly precipitated. She attempted with her usual firmness of mind to check the excessive pain this idea gave her; but Ethelinde saw it through all her endeavours to stifle it: she saw with astonishment that it took every moment stronger possession of her mind, and that something like a presentiment of evil hung heavily on her spirits, which neither her reason, nor her reliance on heaven, could enable her to shake off. She said indeed but little; and

and sought to excuse her tears and her dejection by the part she took in the deep concern and declining health of her brother : but Ethelinde, who from the fears that possessed her own heart was too well enabled to judge of those that corroded the heart of Mrs. Montgomery, found that the strength of mind which had in so many trials supported her, sunk entirely before the fearful idea of having sent her son from her to return no more ; and that the affluence which was now assured to her, far from giving her any satisfaction, was rendered not only tasteless but painful, since it had arrived too late to save her from a sacrifice which she now perpetually accused herself of having needlessly made.

Her mind, relieved from the necessity of any attention to pecuniary matters, had leisure to dwell incessantly on that one object ; and her imagination, warm and tender, was perpetually employed in representing every mode by which misfortune might reach the dear object of her solicitude, of whom she now hardly ever spoke without tears ; and to think on whom without interruption she
would

would frequently shut herself up for many hours in darkness, being at times unable to bear even the company of Ethelinde, which had been once so soothing to her; or to hear the sighs of her brother, whose cureless sorrows for an only son seemed to represent those she was so soon to experience. In about a week this melancholy party set out for Grafmere; where Mrs. Montgomery languished to be: and whither Mr. Harcourt was glad to accompany her, to await what he could not yet expect for some months, the arrival of Victorine and her husband. Ethelinde, oppressed as she was by her fears for Montgomery, which his mother's dreadful despondence rendered so terrible to her, was compelled to exert herself to direct every thing for their journey and to support them on their way: for Mr. Harcourt's health became every day more uncertain; and the mind of his sister seemed in the pain of incertitude to have lost at once all its vigour; she could no longer bestow any attention on the common business of life; and on more material points, if Harcourt ever consulted her,

her,

her, she would declare herself incapable of giving any advice. "If Charles was here," she would say, "he would do every thing. If Charles was in England, you, my brother, would have the best and most active agent. But he, perhaps, may revisit England no more!" The private and various uneasiness which Harcourt felt, and the pressure of bodily infirmity, was increased by observing this sickly despondency obscure the elevated mind of his sister: but his own spirit, broken by sorrow and pain, could make no successful effort to cheer her; and without the gentle and incessant attentions of Ethelinde they would both have sunk under their sufferings before it was possible for any of those persons to arrive who occasioned their solicitude.

Ethelinde gave herself up to the melancholy but not unpleasing task with equal heroism and tenderness. Harcourt was often so ill as to make an attendant necessary both night and day; and while he became so habituated to her assistance that he would receive his medicines from no other hand, she was, for many nights, when his complaints re-
 curred

curred with great violence, obliged to watch by his bed side, not without frequent fears that the deep melancholy into which Mrs. Montgomery had fallen, would be rendered incurable by the accumulated sorrow that the death of her brother would inflict. From his chamber, it was her daily occupation, during five or six weeks that he lay dangerously ill, to go to that of Mrs. Montgomery, (who, when he was worst, had not courage to visit him,) to represent his situation in the most favourable light, and to cheer her spirits with hopes of good news from India: and this she often executed with a frame exhausted with fatigue, and all that sickness of the heart which arises from hope long delayed. When both Mrs. Montgomery and her brother were in more supportable health, she read to them whole days, and found that books alone were capable of detaching their thoughts a moment from their anxieties. This redoubled her zeal, and lightened her fatigue; and if at any time she found her spirits sinking, she remembered that she was the sole dependence of Montgomery's mother and uncle, and
from

from that reflection she acquired new courage. Thus past the months of September, October, and November: Chesterville and his wife had been gone ever since February: the letters which Mr. Harcourt and Ethelinde had dispatched to them in June, had probably reached them at Jamaica in August; and if, as it was most likely, they directly took shipping to return, they might now be in London. But the month of December and part of January elapsed, before a letter from Chesterville, dated at Portsmouth, informed Mr. Harcourt (who had desired him to direct to his merchant in London, who now forwarded the letter,) that he was landed in England, with Victorine, and a little boy, of whom she had been delivered before they embarked.

This welcome intelligence seemed to give new life to Mr. Harcourt. He pressed his sister and Ethelinde to accompany him instantly to London. But Mrs. Montgomery, though she sincerely shared his felicity, could not determine to be present at a meeting ~~which~~ would serve only to remind her of that
which

which she so much more ardently desired: and Ethelinde, however rejoicing in the good fortune of her brother, would on no account leave her. Mr. Harcourt therefore departed alone for London, where he met his daughter with emotions of mingled pain and pleasure so violent, as threatened to shatter his weakened frame to its dissolution. The transition from that indigence which had been relieved only by the friendly interposition of Sir Edward Newenden, to affluence exceeding his most sanguine hopes, had, on the warm unsteady temper of Chesterville, an intoxicating effect. Harcourt, pleased with his figure, his vivacity, and that air of fashion which bespoke him at once well born and well educated, saw none of his faults; and the beauty and sprightly simplicity of his daughter inspired him with the tenderest sensations of paternal fondness. He thought he could never do enough to make up to her the long neglect he had been guilty of, nor be grateful enough to Chesterville for having snatched her from precarious poverty and mortifying dependance. He took therefore an house
for

for them in Portland Place, which he furnished in a superb taste, and purchased for Victorine carriages, cloaths, and jewels; and he delighted to contemplate her thus adorned, and to trace in her lovely figure and animated countenance the resemblance to her mother, whom he had once fondly loved, and with whose premature death he frequently reproached himself. He beheld Chesterville with almost equal regard. That mixture of thoughtlessness and spirit, the easy gaiety which the difficulties he had encountered had not diminished, and which while it became his age and figure did not appear to lessen the susceptibility of his heart, was sufficient to secure him Harcourt's attachment; but when with so many outward perfections, he considered him as having loved and rescued Victorine, this regard arose to infatuation, which even the errors that he could not long conceal were insufficient for some time to cure; for even those errors were converted into perfections by the transmuting power of that partiality which Harcourt had conceived for him; and tho' his expences soon exceeded the ample sum which his father in law had assigned to his use,

they were considered only as instances of proper spirit and commendable pride, which made him very naturally desirous of returning into that rank of life in which he had a right to appear, while at the same time he did honor to his benefactor.

Victorine, as thoughtless and lively as her husband, entered with all the avidity of her age and character into scenes which from their novelty became irresistibly attractive. Her youth, her beauty, her utter ignorance of the world, and the foreign accent that added a peculiar charm to the simplicity of her conversation, drew round her a multitude of admirers. She was pleased with their flattery, and being naturally a coquet, encouraged it; while her female acquaintance made at random, and consisting chiefly of young married women as volatile as herself, were but little calculated to check her giddy career. For the first two or three months her father rather encouraged than checked that rage for amusement, which kept her at her toilet till dinner, in company from that time till five or six the next morning, and invisible to him till the
dinner

dinner of the following day. Towards spring, however, he had another severe attack of the bilious complaint which had so often reduced him to the brink of the grave: and then it was that he missed the sympathizing softness of Ethelinde. His daughter indeed loved him, and enquired tenderly after him two or three times a day; but his only constant nurse was an old housekeeper, who consulted her own ease much more than the alleviation of his infirmities; who would frequently busy herself in putting his apartment to rights when he was disposed to sleep, and who, when he lay restless and in pain, was much oftener snoring in her chair than attentive to the means of his relief; so, that the fatigue of awakening her being more than he could encounter, he sometimes missed his medicines; and sometimes became so low, from this desertion of Victorine, that, when he did take them, they lost their efficacy.

Chesterville had by this time been initiated anew into those scenes where he had formerly been so great a sufferer. He was now less a dupe; but their effects on his

morals and his temper were more likely to be permanent. He played with greater caution; but the love of play took faster hold of his heart. He plunged into expences which he knew Harcourt's fortune could support him in: but by degrees the love of money, or rather of those luxuries and indulgencies which nothing but the possession of it could secure him, blunted his feelings. He had not yet seen his sister since his return to England. He had talked indeed frequently of going down to Grafmere, since she could not be prevailed upon to come to London; but something or other always happened to delay his journey.—The weather was dreadful; or Victorine had made an engagement; or Mr. Harcourt was ill:—and by degrees he grew weary of excuses; losing, with the inclination to see his sister, even the wish to conceal his neglect and unkindness by plausible pretences: and with all the outward appearance of a man of the very first ton, he gradually acquired the callous and selfish insensibility which are supposed too often to accompany boundless prosperity

prosperity and uncontrouled gratification, behind, who knew her brother too well, and dreaded this relapse: and her suspicion that all her fears were realized, increased when, after many evasions of his long proposed visit, Chesterville at length informed her, in the only letter he had written to her for two months, that it would be impossible for him to see her for some time unless she could resolve to come to London; that Mr. Harcourt, who was now somewhat recovered of a tedious illness, had determined to go as soon as he was well enough, to the seat he had purchased in Worcester-shire, where he had never yet been; and that they should be established there for the rest of the year. The whole letter was cold, and Ethelinde thought haughty and boasting.—It spoke of improvements and extensive alterations intended to be made at this superb place: and mentioned eight or ten thousand pounds which Mr. Harcourt intended to expend in enlarging a piece of water, and removing a hill that intercepted the view of it from the house: and he added

—“ You see, dear sister, how difficult it will be for me to find time for a journey into the north this summer; and I wish you could make it convenient to come to us, and that Mrs. Montgomery could accompany you: a wish in which my wife very sincerely joins with, dear Ethy, your’s affectionately, though in great haste,

H. CHESTERVILLE.”

Over this letter, which Ethelinde would not shew to Mrs. Montgomery, she shed the bitterest tears which had fallen from her eyes since the death of her father. In all her other trials—in the comfortless society of the Woolastons, and vulgar insults of the Ludfords—in her own indigent circumstances—even in the absence of the man she adored—there was something not unpleasing mingled with her sorrows.—But here, in the neglect and ingratitude of her brother—of him whom she had so tenderly loved—for whom she had unrepiningly suffered—there was anguish, to the endurance of which her resolution was quite unequal. She saw in his behaviour to her more than neglect—she saw,
with

with great reluctance, that while he could not well avoid giving her a cold and barely civil invitation, it was not his intention she should accept it. He had discovered that Mr. Harcourt's fortune, splendid as it was, was not at all more than he should himself have occasion for: and he did not wish that Montgomery, of whom his uncle spoke with great affection; or Ethelinde, whom he professed to love as well as his own daughter; or Mrs. Montgomery; should possess a large, or indeed any share of what he so well knew how to dispose of. But lately conscious of this narrow principle himself, he had not been able to disguise it even in the short letter he wrote to his sister; but so rapid and irresistible is the progress of selfish avarice when once it seizes on the human heart, that Ethelinde had hardly received the letter sooner than Chelsterville had persuaded himself of the justice of what he desired.—“What claim,” cried he, as he argued the matter with himself,—“what claim has Montgomery to any part of Harcourt's fortune? he is only the son of

his half sister, and certainly ought not to deprive my wife of any share of her inheritance. Besides, 'tis ten to one if ever he returns from the East Indies. As to his mother, what use has an old woman for money; if Harcourt gives her a little decent annuity it is quite enough. As to Ethy indeed, I should be glad to be sure to have her properly provided for; and if Harcourt has a mind to make her a present of a thousand or fifteen hundred pounds it may not be amiss; but as she intends to mope away her life in that out of the way place with Montgomery's mother, I see no sort of use in her having more; and I cannot think it otherwise than an unjust robbery of my son, who has surely the best right to all his grandfather has, that I do not want: besides, I may have a large family, and 'twill be hard to have that money given to others which ought to be a provision for my younger children."

Thus argued the man, who had only a few months before received his sister's jewels, and disposed of them for his support; who had
had

had been obliged to Montgomery for his maintenance while in prison; and who now frequently hazarded, at games of chance, more than four times the sum which he thought a sufficient provision for that sister; and too much for that generous disinterested friend, of whose death he thought with indifference, and whose unwearied friendship he had forgotten.

Ethelinde, while she felt and deplored in silence this cruel change in the heart of her brother, made no effort to counteract the effect his artifice had on Mr. Harcourt. She knew that he had given his sister on their first meeting three Bank bills of a thousand pounds each, to make up, he told her, at once, her loss in France. This sum Mrs. Montgomery had immediately laid out in the stocks; and it made Ethelinde easy as to her future support. If Montgomery returned even without fortune, it was enough to secure them all competence in that retirement which every hour endeared to her; if he returned successful, they should have more than they wanted; and if he never re-

turned—an idea which too often forced itself on her trembling heart—if he never returned — of what use would be the riches of the world to his mother or to herself.

Ethelinde therefore suffered her brother and his wife to proceed in monopolizing entirely the present favour and the future fortune of Mr. Harcourt. Mr. Harcourt himself, however, relinquished less willingly the delight which, from their first interview, he had received from the company of his sister and her fair friend; and as soon as he arrived at his house in Worcestershire, he wrote pressingy to them to come to him. But Mrs. Montgomery, whose health anxiety had cruelly shaken, could not determine to quit the tranquil scenes of Grasmere for the tumultuous abode of gaiety and splendour; for such Victorine, unconscious of his motives, had, at Chesterville's desire, described Mr. Harcourt's house to be in her letters to Ethelinde. The improvements that were in progress, the amusements she partook, and the variety of company she saw, she described with as much vivacity

city as she enjoyed them; narratives which Ethelinde read with pity and concern, and from which the sick heart of Mrs. Montgomery recoiled with distaste.

Very differently did *they* pass those days, which, fond as they were of each other and of the solitude they inhabited, would have passed in serene satisfaction, had not every one in its progress been embittered with anxiety. At length however they were rendered comparatively happy, by receiving letters from Montgomery that he was arrived at Bengal. But, grateful as his mother was to heaven for this intelligence; the idea of the fearful distance between them, and the dangers to which (since Mr. Harcourt's return) she had needlessly permitted him to be exposed, hung heavy on her heart; and Ethelinde had often occasion to shew an appearance of confidence and courage she was far from feeling, to sustain the spirits of her venerable and beloved friend.

CHAPTER IX.

WHILE Ethelinde was watching over the declining health, and soothing the painful solicitude of Mrs. Montgomery, many weeks passed—not indeed happily, but in that state of satisfaction which the consciousness of doing her duty, of acquitting herself towards heaven and earth, has alone power to bestow. This resigned and cheerful confidence was confirmed, when other letters were received from Montgomery.—These gave an account of his health having received less injury from the climate than is common to Europeans during their first abode in it: the letter to his mother was particularly cheerful, and its perusal gave her at first more pleasure than her heart had, since his departure, been capable of feeling; but after she began to study it, as she did for many days, all her anxiety returned, though not to so painful an excess. She reflected

flected that eight months had passed since that letter was written; and her tenderness made her so ingenious in tormenting herself, that she was perpetually considering all the circumstances which might since that period have occurred to retard or prevent his return. It was still worse when she read his letter to Ethelinde. The ardour of his affection for her, had rendered him less capable of dissimulation; and forgetting the probability there was that his mother would see his letter, he related the disasters of his voyage, which had been tedious and unhealthy; and there appeared a languor and despondence in the style, a dread of being separated from her for ever, which he could not disguise. Of his actual situation he said, that it might be extremely lucrative to some other man; but that he had found it so impossible with his principles and his feelings to fill it, that he had solicited and obtained a removal to a distant settlement; where his knowledge of languages would be of great service to the company, and whither

ther he should go in a few weeks from the date of his letter. He spoke in his letter to his mother of the same intention, but to her he described it as a matter of choice and of probable advantage. Now however it appeared, not only as removing him farther from her, and making it much longer before the letters of recall which she had sent out would reach him; but as a measure to which he was compelled by the unpleasantness of that situation which had been so differently described to him; and magnifying all her apprehensions, she soon relapsed into the depressing anxiety from which the first perusal of these letters had roused her.

Ethelinde, tender and timid as she was, was yet so much tranquillized by having good accounts of his health, and so gratified by those expressions of unalterable, and if possible of increased attachment with which his letters were filled, that her heart seemed again open to the lively impressions of hope; and the future appeared to her in softer colours. Spring was now far advanced,
and

and the season contributed to soothe her mind and to aid her representation of future happiness, when Montgomery should return; and, relieving her from every sorrow and solicitude, give to the beautiful scenes of Grasmere their greatest charm.

Every spot about the cottage was endeared to her by some recollection of him.—The row of laurels in the court, he had himself planted when he first came thither with his mother; they were now large trees; and beyond them, next the water, was a weeping willow, under which he had been used to sit with a book, on a bench he had made himself. Several drawings he had done of rocks and little pieces of scenery about the lake, hung in the parlour; and over his mother's chair was a picture of him painted in France when he was a boy. On these memorials Ethelinde had with melancholy pleasure gazed during the long winter; now she looked at them with renewed sensations of hope and delight. Montgomery was well; his love was undiminished; his absence, now no longer necessary, was likely

likely to terminate many years sooner than her most sanguine expectations had represented. She thought with delight on the moment when she should give him an account of the manner in which she had passed her time since his departure: in attending on his beloved mother; in perfecting herself in those accomplishments he delighted in; in studying the books he loved; and as she was dressing, she beheld, with conscious satisfaction, a face and figure which had lost none of their charms during his absence. When any apprehensions of accidents or delays occurred to her, she repulsed and stifled them as much as possible, and endeavoured to impart some portion of her own confidence and hope to the bosom of Mrs. Montgomery; for whom she not only felt as being the mother of her lover, but with the same tenderness as if she had been her own. *She* seemed indeed to have filled that vacancy in her soft heart which the loss of her father had left; but time diminished nothing of that filial tenderness with which she had loved him, and now cherished his memory.

Towards

Towards the middle of May she received from her brother, who now very seldom wrote, a cold letter in answer to several of her's. He seemed out of humour, without knowing, or at least being willing to own, why he was so: he named the perpetual ill health of Mr. Harcourt in a way that Ethelinde thought unfeeling, and added, "his idea is now to have Mrs. Montgomery and you with him at Clare Park this summer.—You may do as you please, but trust me you will find it far from pleasant." Ethelinde felt hurt, not only by the general coldness of the letter, but by the desire it expressed to keep her and Mrs. Montgomery at a distance from Mr. Harcourt. A confused idea of his motives mingled itself with her reflections.—"Is it possible," said she, "that Harry can suppose our presence would be prejudicial to him?—Surely he cannot harbour of me—of Mrs. Montgomery—any suspicions that we are capable of injuring his interest, even if it were in our power!—I will rather suppose that the reluctance, which, however distantly expressed, is evident enough,

arises

arises from consciousness that he has again embarked in indiscreet expences. He fears I may remonstrate with him; he loves not to hear advice; solicitous only to forget the past that he may enjoy the present, he would evade the representations of his sister who remembers too much of one to enter with equal avidity into the pleasures offered by the other, and who might, he thought, disturb his gaiety by setting before him what he was so desirous of recollecting no longer. A few posts after the receipt of this letter, Mrs. Montgomery received one from Mr. Harcourt, which ran thus——

Portland Place, May 17, 17—.

“ What can be the reason, my dear sister, that I hear so seldom from you, and that, since the letter which informed me of the favourable intelligence you have received of our dear Charles, I have not had one line from you or from Ethelinde. While you fondly count the moments that are yet to elapse before you can embrace your son, do not forget, dear Caroline, that you have a
brother

brother equally anxious for the arrival of that fortunate period; and who has, alas! no son of his own. Mrs. Chesterville is desirous of staying in London some time longer—she must be indulged. Of Mr. Chesterville, I of late see so little that I cannot say much;—he is I know as fond of London as my daughter is, at this gay season; but my health and my inclination equally urge me to go immediately into Worcestershire. Contrive, I beg of you, to meet me there. Change of scene will benefit your health; nothing can be of so great advantage to mine, as your's and Ethelinde's company; nothing else indeed has power to mitigate the pains of body and mind which are frequently to be endured by your ever affectionate

W. HARCOURT."

To this letter Ethelinde prevailed on Mrs. Montgomery to give an answer of assent. They had no business in London; and therefore fixing their departure at the distance of a week, when they knew Mr. Harcourt

Harcourt would be in Worcestershire, they joined him there by slow journies. Ethelinde left Grafmere with regret, but still in the delightful hope of revisiting it soon with Montgomery. The journey afforded her pleasure, from the novelty of the scenes it presented to her: she saw with satisfaction that Mrs. Montgomery's thoughts, though never to be diverted from their principal object, took a more chearful turn; and though after her arrival at Clare Park, she declined being much in company, she became more chearful than she had been for many months before. There were yet very few families in the neighbourhood, as it was the season when London was full of attractions; but, in the company of his sister and of Ethelinde, Mr. Harcourt found new reason to delight in the tranquillity which was, in the absence of Chesterville and Victorine, restored to his house.

Chesterville, was very little pleased with the party who were now so well pleased with each other; but he was too deeply immersed in the pursuit of those pleasures.

pleasures which London only afforded, to prevail upon himself to quit it in order to counteract the influence he apprehended. He was polite enough therefore to affect content he was far from feeling; and Victorine, inattentive to every thing but amusement, considered very little about her father; or when she thought of him, rather rejoiced that the company of Mrs. Montgomery and Ethelinde would preclude the necessity of her early attendance on him in the country. Her child, of whom he was extremely fond, was with him, and that she thought sufficient security against any other partiality. The natural tenderness of Ethelinde's heart made her also much attached to the little boy, and gave her new character, new charms, in the eyes of Harcourt; who could not reflect without pain on the different disposition of Victorine. Whenever he involuntarily made this comparison, he instantly reverted to his own conduct; and asked himself whether the faults of Victorine were not rather owing to his former neglect of her, than to her natural disposition; and, while he blamed his

OWN.

own former errors, he endeavoured to excuse those in the present conduct of his daughter, to which could he not be blind, while the endearing manners of Ethelinde perpetually reminded him of a contrast so mortifying.

In every soothing attention to him and to his sister, in the practice of every virtue and the cultivation of every talent that gives dignity and lustre to the female character, Ethelinde passed in retirement near three months, before Chesterville and his wife came into the country. Her walks, though solitary, were not unpleasing; for the image of Montgomery was ever present to her, and the sanguine hope of his return soothed and tranquillized her mind.

But this calm was at an end when, in the month of August, Chesterville and Victorine came down. He could not live an hour without company, play, and the highest luxuries of the table: she had no other pleasure in coming into the country, than that which she was to derive from the splendour they were to exhibit before the neighbouring families; who no sooner heard of their arrival,

val, than they began a round of dinners, in which, all, whether they could afford it or not, emulated the luxury and magnificence of Clare Park. Mrs. Montgomery had been reconciled to her long absence from her beloved cottage by seeing how much her brother was gratified by her abode with him; but now she became very anxious to return to it; for though she usually declined appearing in company, the whole style of the house was become unpleasing to her, and she saw with silent concern, that Mr. Harcourt was rendered unhappy by a manner of life which he yet wanted resolution to break through.

Ethelinde was yet more unhappy than either of them: for, in addition to the desultory, confused, and generally disagreeable society, which broke in upon her time and fatigued her with pertness and insipidity, she had occasion to remark, almost on their first interview, the strange alteration which prosperity had made in her brother. He was now no longer the gay and amiable, though thoughtless Chesterville, who was at once
blamed

blamed and beloved:—but his manners partook of the change that had happened in his heart. The ambition which was now a leading feature in his character, had irritated rather than checked that love of play that had before been so fatal to him: but it had taught him caution, reserve, and artifice. He had of late passed all his time between the cabals of party, and the vigils of the gaming-house; and his vivacity and his feeling had vanished together. Hardness and carelessness of manner had succeeded; and, though he was still on his guard before Mr. Harcourt, he no longer took any pains to conceal from the rest of the world, the sentiments he had adopted, or the life he preferred. Amid all his former errors, Ethelinde had ever depended on the natural goodness and rectitude of his heart; and fondly hoped, that his innate generosity and tenderness would finally conquer the defects of his character: but when she found him become proud, reserved, and ungrateful, avaricious, ambitious, and ostentatious; valuing himself on his birth, which never before
seemed

seemed to have been considered enough, and displeas'd at every expence Mr. Harcourt engaged in, which contributed nothing to the gratification of his vanity, Ethelinde could deceive herself no more, and was convinc'd too certainly that she had no longer a brother. Among the people of high fashion, with whom only he was accustomed to live, Ethelinde heard him, with some surprize, mention Lord Hawkhurst.

“Of whom do you speak, Harry,” enquired she: “of my father’s brother?”

“Certainly,” replied he. “I know no other of the name.”

“And you have often seen his Lordship?”

“Very often. He and the family are coming to his house in this country in a few days, in order to be near us the rest of the summer. We are to be a good deal together.”

Ethelinde, however unwilling to mortify him, could not help saying gravely—“You have forgotten then, or at least forgiven the offence you once took, when you thought that
that

that Lord Hawkhurst neglected my father and insulted me."

"Oh, as to that," replied he coldly,—
"it was merely misrepresentation; what could he do, you know, for other people when he has so large a family of his own.—That is, you know—that among people of a certain rank—in short, it is impossible that in a certain style of life the same attention can be given to relations as middling folks can give, who may have, perhaps, nothing else to do."

"Not if the relations of these people in a certain style are distressed," replied Ethelinde.—"But in affluence, in prosperity, there is no occasion to remind them of the ties of blood.—Lord Hawkhurst could forsake and neglect his brother in penury; in the confines of a prison; but to his nephew, possessed of Mr. Harcourt's income, Lord Hawkhurst feels himself related."

"Natural enough," said Chesterville carelessly.—"It is the way of the world, child, and if you are determined to quarrel with every body who does the same, you had
had

had better return again to Grafsmere, for you will hardly find elsewhere any such sentimental folks as you seem to desire."

"I wish I was at Grafsmere," sighed Ethelinde, her eyes filling with tears, "or rather with that beloved parent, who, but for such detestable doctrine, might still have been alive."

"*Vous etes la Maitresse Madame,*" cried Chesterville, yawning.

This was rather too much; the gentleness of Ethelinde gave way a moment to indignation she could not suppress.—"Good God! Mr. Chesterville," cried she, "is it thus you receive the mention of a father—of such a father—whose death—"

"Lookee, sister," interrupted he very abruptly, "I have now the means of being happy, and happy I am determined to make myself. What is the use of croaking over past troubles? 'twill mend nothing; and now they are over, why should we think about them? Come, have done whimpering, child, and go dress yourself for dinner. Some Frenchman, Voltaire is it not,

says, '*que les maux ne sont bon que peur oblier.*' Faith I am quite of his mind ; and of that of some other honest fellow, a poet of our own, I forget who, who says—

“ Curs'd by no slavish rules, our wisest plan
 “ Is sure—to be as happy as we can.”

Believe me, Ethy, a pretty woman, (and upon my soul you are sometimes divinely handsome) a pretty woman never mistakes her interest more than when she affects to be wise and sententious. If you would but be a little ridiculous, put on a good deal of rouge, and talk a reasonable quantity of nonsense, I should not doubt seeing you so much the fashion that you might form some high connection.”

“ I have no such ambition, Sir,” said Ethelinde ; “ surely among other things that you have suddenly forgotten are your obligations and my affection for the generous——(he is not indeed rich, and therefore I must not perhaps call him your friend)—the generous, noble minded Montgomery.”

“ No upon my soul I have a great regard for Montgomery ; I have faith ; but what
 good

good does it do, you know, to a fellow so many thousand miles off, and who, perhaps, may never come back. I'll answer for it he thinks but little of this violent affection that you fancy you have for him. Upon my life, Ethy, I wish you happy, and therefore I wish you could get this whining romantic nonsense out of your head about inviolable friendship and everlasting love: stuff that you have picked up from the novels and story books you are eternally reading. In real life such *things are not*. Why now only consider for a moment how excessively silly you will look, if after pining and peaking away twelve or fourteen years of your best looking days in hopes of the dear youth's return to fulfil his vows, he imports an Asiatic wife and half a dozen little yellow children; you of course will die of despair; *c'est la regle*, you know; and so poor Charles, who of course thinks you have more sense than to wait for such distant contingencies, will be hurt and unhappy, and all that, perhaps the rest of his life."

This image, however ludicrously represented, was insupportable. Ethelinde, inca-

pable of answering, rose and left the room; and her brother, careless of the pain he had thus wantonly inflicted, went out at another door, humming a tune, and calling to his gentleman to attend him in his dressing room.

Ethelinde, after this dialogue, avoided as much as possible being alone with her brother, which was by no means difficult; for before he and Victorine were visible in a morning, she had usually made breakfast for Mrs. Montgomery and Mr. Harcourt, had read to them for three or four hours, and had retired to her music or her books.

Chesterville rose late, and then drove or rode out for the rest of the morning, returned only time enough to dress for dinner, at which he had generally company; and as soon as coffee was over, play filled up the interval, till supper, at three or four in the morning, broke up the tables.

Discontent and disappointment preyed on the health and spirits of Mr. Harcourt; and their effect was the more severe, because his tenderness for his daughter prevented his remonstrating with her or her husband. His
fortune

fortune was so ample that their expences, great as they were, had not yet hurt it. He was content that they should expend his income ; and when he felt himself disposed to murmur at the little consideration they seemed to have for him in the manner of their doing it, he still endeavoured to repress them, and to persuade himself it was unreasonablc that two young people, who possessed all the advantages of nature and fortune, should submit to that confined manner of life, which misfortune and ill health had rendered desirable to his sister and himself.

Mrs. Montgomery saw, but was too generous and too considerate to notice or encourage, uneasiness which could only be productive of a coolness, perhaps of a breach between him and his children : she endeavoured, therefore, to divert his attention from the scenes of dissipation that passed in one part of the house by forming a little society in the other, where, under the pretence of being herself indisposed, her brother might, in her apartment, enjoy his own amusements and his own hours.

CHAPTER X.

THE family of Lord Hawkhurst was now arrived at Abersley, the seat of his ancestors, an old but magnificent house about ten miles from the seat of Mr. Harcourt. They sent immediately to enquire after the family at Clare Park; and his Lordship, in a very affectionate letter to his nephew, expressed a wish that, among persons so nearly related, all ceremony might be waved; and proposed with Lady Hawkhurst and his daughters to have the honor of dining with Mr. Harcourt the following Thursday.

Chesterville, who, well born as he was, had lately acquired a passion for nobility, and had learned to value himself on his descent, was pleased with this letter; and Mr. Harcourt, desirous of shewing every attention to the uncle of Victorine's husband, desired him to express his pleasure at the proposal, and to give orders for such an entertainment as would do honor

honor to the fortune of the visited and the rank of the visitors.

Thus commissioned, Chesterville failed not to acquit himself well. Every delicacy that money could purchase was procured in profusion. The superb services of plate; the elegant decorations of the table; the numerous attendants, and fashionable luxuries that were displayed; all served to impress on his guests the conviction of Harcourt's boundless fortune, which in London was less exhibited and less remarked.

Mrs. Montgomery, conquering on this occasion her reluctance to mix with company, sat at table, of which Victorine did the honours; and Ethelinde, more beautiful than ever, took her seat below the youngest of the Lady Chesterville's; who all affected to be highly gratified by thus meeting her, though so few months had passed since they neglected and slandered her.

Lady Hawkhurst, however, though she now studiously concealed it, was not less sensible of the pain she had always felt in being compelled internally to acknowledge the su-

periority her personal charms had over those by which she hoped her daughters would long since have obtained affluent establishments. None of them were yet married. By a change of ministry her Lord had lost his places; and his fortune was so conditioned as to leave it little in his power to provide for his daughters in a manner suitable to their rank. It had been the study of her Ladyship's life to get them well married; but in this important object she had hitherto failed, probably from the ill judged avidity with which she pursued it. .•

The day passed with all that unmeaning politeness which so ill supplies the place of confidence and affection. Harcourt exerted himself as much as he could; Mrs. Montgomery had ever all the ease and unaffected elegance of real fashion. The young ladies were sprightly and talkative, and conversed with Victorine on what they had seen and done in London after she left it; and Lady Hawkhurst dropped the usual haughty superiority of her manner for a sort of fawning politeness, extremely disgusting to Mrs. Montgomery
and

and Ethelinde, but such as her Ladyship thought exactly calculated to impress the whole company with ideas of her goodness and condescension; while Lord Hawkhurst addressed himself principally to Mr. Harcourt; and among many encomiums on his generosity to his dear nephew, he spared not to speak of that dear nephew in very high terms, to talk very much at large of the family interest, and to propose bringing him into parliament for one of his own boroughs. Chesterville was now no longer the giddy unfortunate boy, of whom he never augured any good; but his dear Harry, his only nephew, the second hope of his family. Ethelinde, who, except her brother, was alone sensible of this extraordinary change, could hardly repress the dislike and contempt that she felt. She was civil, however, but silent; and heartily rejoiced when the whole party, after inviting Mr. Harcourt and all his family to dinner the following week, returned home. Lady Hawkhurst was no sooner seated in her coach, and driven from the door, than she thus began—

“ Either this Mr. Harcourt has a mine, or he

is a madman. Pray, my Lord, does he always make the figure he did to-day?"

"Yes, I believe so," replied Lord Hawkhurst; "and why should he not? he has a very great fortune."

"So I always understood, but I had no idea *how* great a fortune. I figured to myself too that he was an old man; why he is yet in the middle of life."

About three and forty, I believe; though ill health and a residence in a hot climate, make him, I think, look older than he is."

"And pray, my Lord, what do you judge his fortune really to be?"

"The estate in this country is a good four thousand five hundred a year after all deductions. He has made, I understand, a very advantageous purchase in Staffordshire of upwards of three. He has a very great estate still in Jamaica, and I have been credibly informed not less than sixty thousand pounds in the funds."

"And will your nephew, will Chesterville be posselt of all this?"

"I sup-

“ I suppose so ; yes certainly, unless he marries again.”

A silence of some minutes ensued. “ Unless he marries again,” repeated Lady Hawkhurst to herself ; “ and why should he not ? What a match for Lady Belle or Lady Helen. What signifies age ? besides he is not so old.” From this moment, the idea that it was possible to bring this about, took such strong possession of her Ladyship’s imagination that she could think of nothing else. “ Four thousand five hundred a year here ; three more in Staffordshire ; as much again in Jamaica, and sixty thousand pounds in the funds !” repeated she, as she was undressing ; “ and all to go to a natural daughter, that little black Spanish girl, while *my* daughters may drag out their lives in the honourable indigence of necessitous nobility, and live all together pining on ! a poor four or five hundred a year, with a job coach, two maids and a footman.”

“ I have been thinking, my Lord,” said she to her husband the next morning, as she made tea for him in her dressing room, “ I have been thinking what a pity it is that Mr.

Harcourt

Harcourt does not marry again. He is an agreeable man—I really think him very agreeable; and what a fortune! I declare I should not be sorry to hear he had taken a fancy to Lady Arabella.”

“Nor I, I give you my honor, Madam. I wonder, that anxious as you justly are on that point, it never occurred to you before.”

“Why I had fancied him an old decrepid creature; and as to his fortune, I never imagined it so splendid.”

“Well, Madam, since you now see him and his fortune in another light, try what can be done to make him look upon either of your daughters as a desirable party for him: but let me give you one piece of advice; the girls have lost two or three very good matches, and I suspect that you don't fish with art enough; before the prey is well hooked you draw your line. Excuse me; you understand the terms of angling; the artificial fly will not do here; it must be a ground bait; and remember that it is the interest of so many to spoil your sport, that you must have all your eyes about you.”

“Pooh!

“ Pooh ! my Lord, I am serious.”

“ I give you my honor, Madam, so am I ; perfectly serious ; and therefore Lady Hawkhurst it is that I bid you beware of Mrs. Montgomery, of Chesterville and his little hawk-eyed wife, and above all of my demure, but very pretty, and, as I suspect, very fly niece Ethelinde.”

“ Surely you don't think she has the same plan herself ?”

“ No ; she is said to be engaged, you know, to young Montgomery ; but there is no—I say, Madam, there is no knowing—money—money, Lady Hawkhurst, does every thing in this world.” This polite and noble couple soon after parted ; and her Ladyship retiring to her *boudoir*, sat down to consider how she should open the campaign against the heart of poor Harcourt, in whose park and house, plate, jewels, equipage, and fortune, she saw so many charms.

Lady Arabella, brought up to consider a great establishment as the only good worthy of her ambition, and now in her twenty fifth year, had seen, not without much severe mortification,

tification, many of her acquaintance who had, she thought, no better pretensions than herself, disposed of to men of fortune. The mercenary maxims in which she had been educated made her entirely indifferent as to the accomplishments of the person she might marry; and Mr. Harcourt's fortune being adequate to her expectation, she readily entered into the plan her mother suggested, and became immediately in consequence of this arrangement so extremely attached to Victorine and Ethelinde, that she could not resist the pleasure of visiting them twice on horseback before the day when they were to meet again; and contrived so adroitly to flatter Victorine, that she became quite charmed with her company, and much of her thoughts and conversation dwelt on the good humour, vivacity, elegance, and fashion of Lady Belle.

The day at length arrived when the family at Clare Park were to fulfil their engagement at Abersley. Mrs. Montgomery, who really was ill, was allowed to decline going. Ethelinde felt the necessity of her attendance, and however reluctantly, was obliged to comply; but

but she was now going to visit for the first time the paternal seat of her ancestors—the place where her father had passed his youth, and which she had often heard him describe with that melancholy delight which a sensible mind feels in recalling the scenes of those gay hopes and early enjoyments that return no more. To this house, his profession, and the coolness which had, in consequence of his marriage, long alienated him from his brother, had occasioned him to be many years a stranger. He had often expressed to his daughter a wish to revisit it with her; and now! she was, by a chain of unexpected events, to go thither—not as a daughter of the family, but as a mere visitor; and to recall the image of her father only to recollect that he was in his coffin in the neighbouring church; which, like many of those in remote counties, yet adjoined the old family mansion of the Chestervilles.

With spirits extremely depressed, Ethelinde sat out. They were not raised by observing the careless indifference of her brother, who, occupied entirely by present plans and pleasures,

pleasures, seemed not to have the least recollection of the circumstance that so deeply affected his sister. Their noble hosts received the whole party with expressions of civility bordering on adulation. Lady Hawkhurst addressed herself with marked attention to Mr. Harcourt: she placed him next to herself; conversed with him about his improvements, which she highly commended; softened her voice when she enquired about his illness, and asked with all the affectation of tender sollicitude what advice he had had, and from what medicines and regimen he found most benefit? Harcourt, utterly unconscious of the meaning of all this sollicitude, answered her enquiries and cajoleries with the air of a man who felt himself obliged and fatigued by well meant but irksome civilities. At length the tedious dinner ended, and by the ladies retiring he was released.

Lady Hawkhurst left the young ladies for a few moments; and then, as the Lady Chertevilles and Victorine had nearly exhausted the topics that were common between them, one of them proposed going to the billiard
room

room till tea time; to which Victorine assented: but Ethelinde, whose melancholy reflections unfitted her for play or conversation, begged to be excused; and when she saw them engaged she left them, and walked alone through the spacious apartments and galleries of the house. At the end of a gallery she came into a room that seemed to have been forsaken by the family. It had received no alteration for many years; and was darkened by cedar wainscoting and rich arras, on which hung several family pictures. She was struck instantly with that of her father, in the uniform of his regiment while an ensign. The likeness was so strong, that it gave her instantly the idea of him as she remembered him: it seemed to look pensively upon her while she gazed at it with indescribable emotion and melted into tears.

It was the second week in September; the sun was already sunk amid deep red clouds, and the little light he yet lent was lessened by a rookery of elms which were between that part of the house and the church yard. The long old fashioned windows in ponderous frames,

frames, admitted the twilight reluctantly, while the tapestry hangings, and curtains of purple mixed damask, gave to the whole room, every part of which retained its ancient massy magnificence, that gloom and obscurity which inspired and encouraged the most melancholy thoughts. Ethelinde remained gazing on the picture of her father till the canvas no longer received any rays of light; but her tears still flowed, though the object that had excited them faded in surrounding darkness. When she could distinguish his features no longer, she slowly moved towards one of the windows and turned her eyes towards the spot where the form which was there represented in youth and health was mouldering into dust.

Beyond the chancel of the church, and appearing indistinctly through the trees, a kind of mausoleum was erected over the family vault. The imagination of Ethelinde had by the sudden sight of this picture powerfully recalled the recollection of her father, and now, while she fixed her eyes on his monument, ran over the scenes which passed immediately before his death; the tenderness he had shewn
for

for his son even at the moment he was precipitated to the grave by his ill conduct; his fond attachment to her; and the charge he had given in her behalf to that brother who now seemed to have forgotten it all;—and contrasting with this mournful remembrance those scenes she every day saw, with the coldness, ingratitude, and profusion to which she was a reluctant witness; with her own deserted and dependant situation; she fell at length from the slow languor of sorrow into an agony of tears; and uttering aloud an apostrophe to her father, she invoked his tender and benign spirit to soothe and console her.

Suddenly a gust of wind rushed through the long gallery which divided these apartments from those where she had left the company; and the door, which had not been quite closed, heavily opened before her. Ethelinde shuddered. “He hears me,” cried she; “surely he hears me, and comes from his grave to meet me!” Her reason a moment checked the idea; but fancy, so long busied in restoring his countenance, his voice, and gesture,

ture, had already the superiority. She looked fearfully towards the slowly opening door, and she figured to herself her father standing there and beckoning to her to follow him. She stepped forward from the window as if she would have sprung towards the phantom she had thus raised; but without feeling what impeded her she fell suddenly on her knees, and losing all powers of action and recollection, she remained in that posture with her head leaning against the gilt iron work of a large marble table that was between the windows. There she would probably have remained, for she seemed to be totally forgotten by the rest of the company, if a violent storm, of which the sudden gust of wind had been the forerunner, had not shaken the whole building. The housekeeper came round the rooms to see if the windows were shut against the torrents of rain which were falling. She had a candle in her hand; but on entering the room, she saw a figure in white kneeling between the windows, and without giving herself time to think of any thing but the stories of ghosts and apparitions,
with

with which the servants in old and seldom inhabited houses delight to terrify each other, she let the candle fall, and hastened back in great terror to her own room.

Fear now possessed the other servants; to whom she related, that by a flash of lightening she had seen a spirit in the north drawing room. This end of the house, from it's being little used by the family, and so near the church yard, had always the reputation of being haunted. After a few moments of debate, it was agreed that her own footman should communicate this singular circumstance to Lady Hawkhurst, for Mrs. Perkins declared that for her own part she was too nervous and ill to stir out of her chair for all the world; and she questioned if ever she should be her right self again as long as she lived. While hartshorn, therefore, and drops were applied by the female servants, the footman marched up to his lady, looking behind him at every step; and entering the room where her Ladyship was with Victorine and her daughters, he informed her in a whisper

per that Mrs. Perkins was taken in fits from having seen a spirit in the north apartment.

Sensible of very little fear from the inhabitants of this world, Lady Hawkhurst was still less apprehensive of those of another. "Seen a spirit?" cried she, indignantly; "seen a fool! What does the ridiculous old woman mean?"

"Indeed, my Lady," replied the man, "I don't know; but to be certain she is very much frightened, and there is not one of the maids as will go to that side of the house, tho' it rains so, and many of the windows, my Lady, are open."

"Go then, and shut them yourself," cried her Ladyship, "and trouble me no more with such supreme folly." The man, quite as fearful as the old housekeeper herself, now stood aghast, till Lady Hawkhurst, who, after a moment's pause, found more to laugh than to be offended at, took a candle herself, and desiring Victorine and her daughters to follow her, she went to the room, where Ethelinde, the cause of all this alarm, was found on the floor. Lady Hawkhurst, on speaking to her,
was

was surpris'd to find her almost senseless; they rais'd her, however, and placed her on a sofa; where, after some time, she was able only to say, that she believed a flash of lightning had struck her down, (which was really the case) that she was suddenly sensible of giddiness and stupor, as if she had received a violent blow; and though she appeared not to have sustained any injury from fire, her eyes were much affected, and her head still greatly confus'd. She was still so faint and ill that it was impossible for her to return to Clare Park that night; Lady Hawkhurst, therefore, had her put to bed; and it was propos'd to Mr. Harcourt that he also should stay, as Chester-ville and Victorine had before agreed to do, the former being engag'd to go on a shooting party with his uncle; but Harcourt, who knew Mrs. Montgomery would be much alarmed, and who on account of his ill health was unwilling to sleep out of his own house, declin'd staying, notwithstanding the pressing instances of Lady Hawkhurst, and the gentleness with which Lady Belle besought him to consider the length of his journey in weather
so

so unfavourable. He visited Ethelinde before his departure; and though he had been at first very much alarmed at the strange accident that had befallen her, he left her in less uneasiness, as she spoke to him calmly, and assured him that from whatever cause so sudden an indisposition had arisen, it was not likely to be of any consequence; but that she should probably be well enough to accompany him home the next morning, when he promised to return early to fetch her.

When he was gone, however, and when Ethelinde had prevailed on the youngest of the Lady Chesterville's to leave her, the idea of having seen her father recurred again to her mind with all its force; and far from thinking of it with terror, she cherished the soothing melancholy it impressed. "He came not," said she, "to alarm and terrify, but to soothe and console me. To give me, perhaps, intimation of some approaching calamity, or to strengthen my mind against present regret." Untinctured with any shade of superstition as her mind was, it yet received with avidity an impression so soothing to that tenderness with
which

which she cherished the memory of her father, and insensibly sleep stole upon her, which, though it shut not out the images that had employed her waking thoughts, refreshed and relieved her; and at a very early hour in the morning she awoke, feeling little or no remains of the giddiness and stupor which she had been so sensible of the preceding evening, and just in that state, when she thought a quiet walk would entirely restore her.

She arose therefore, and dressing herself in a morning gown and cap, with which her cousins had accommodated her, she went down stairs. All the inhabitants of the house were buried in sleep; and on going out, she found only a labourer mowing the grass, by whom she was directed through a shrubbery to the church yard, as she desired more nearly to view the place

“ Where all her buried ancestors were pack’d.”*

Sitting down on a rustic and half ruined tomb, she contemplated with mournful pleasure the picturesque appearance it made adjoining the church, which was very antique, and its nar-

row windows half hid by mantles of ivy; while from among the mouldering buttrasses young ash trees waved their light leaves, and the fern, and the wall flower, with variety of lichens and mosses, were scattered about the broken grey stone of the roof, and among the inequality of the arches and windows. A group of yew and cypress, relieved with their spicy forms the more solid and regular mass of stone which composed the mausoleum; and beyond the church, as well as on one side of it, an extensive wood of very ancient elms formed a dark and magnificent back ground, and was the habitation of innumerable rooks, who, with the owls and daws that had found dwellings about the church itself, mingled their cries at this early hour in the morning with the wind, murmuring hollow among the ruinous buildings and surrounding trees.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XI.

AFTER a pensive ramble of above two hours, Ethelinde returned to the house. Only the inferior servants were yet risen; and Ethelinde, having in vain wandered over several rooms in search of a book, to amuse her in the long interval she yet had to pass before breakfast, was at length shewn by one of the house maids into a small dressing room, where the young ladies were accustomed to sit in a morning, and where the servant assured her there were variety of books. Books, however, there were none but two or three novels which Ethelinde had already read; but under the harpsichord were several French news papers scattered among the music books which lay there. Ethelinde took them to read, and seeing, in one of those of the latest date, East India news, it immediately caught her attention.

It contained an account brought by a

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French

French ship to Bourdeaux which had touched at the Mauritiás, and said, that a few weeks before an English vessel in its passage from Calcutta to Madrás, had been driven by a tornado out of her course, and after beating about many weeks without being able to regain it, had, after suffering every inconvenience of famine and fatigue, at length approached so near the harbour on the Isle of Bourbon, that they were in hopes of gaining it: but in consequence of a squall of wind which overtook them they were violently driven towards a rocky part of the coast beyond; and the sailors and passengers, enfeebled by famine and fatigue, had many of them perished, while only a few reached the shore to relate their complicated disasters.

This detail, heightened by many circumstances of horror, extremely affected Ethelinde, though it related the calamity of persons who were, as she supposed, strangers to her. What then was the agony of her mind, when in a list of about half a dozen names of persons who were passengers, she saw that of Montgomery among those who were lost.

The

The paper fell from her trembling hand. The room seemed to turn round with her. She no longer wept; she was incapable of weeping; but heartstruck, she seemed deprived, by the shock, of all power of reflection or enquiry. When she could breathe, which was not for some minutes, she again took up the paper, and again the fatal paragraph appeared. The remembrance of what Montgomery had said of his intended departure to another settlement, rushed then upon her mind, and instantly confirmed the probability of this dreadful account.

She would have given the world at that moment to have had somebody near her to whom she could communicate this fearful intelligence, in hopes of their bringing arguments to render this truth doubtful; but had any of the family been visible, they knew not Montgomery, and were little of a disposition to embarrass themselves about the fate of a stranger. Ethelinde had seen too many instances of their inattention to the calamities of others, even where they could have assuaged those calamities, not to be very cer-

tain that she should fatigue them by complaints without obtaining any of that patient pity of which her sick heart stood so much in need. Her brother was the only person to whom she could apply on such a topic; and while she traversed the room with trembling steps, listening to hear if his voice was distinguishable in the hall; now attempting to lessen her terrors by recollecting how often false reports arise, and her soul now sinking under the dread that it might be true; she felt a secondary apprehension in remembering how little her brother had of late seemed to think of his absent friend, and in doubting whether, occupied as he now continually was in pleasures and pursuits of his own, she should even from him meet with tenderness and sympathy.

The circumstances of the preceding evening, the heavy presentiment of impending evil which she in vain had endeavoured to throw off, all seemed to form to her oppressed and alarmed imagination a kind of internal evidence of the truth of this fatal intelligence, and amid undecribable wretchedness, she
passed

passed near two hours before a servant came to inform her that breakfast was ready.

With a countenance so much affected by the pain she endured that it gave her the appearance of having recently arisen from the bed of sickness, she followed the servant down, and entered a room where gaiety was visible even to extravagance. The young ladies were tittering at something which was a secret to every body but themselves and Victorine; Lady Hawkhurst was entertaining, with a flow of eloquence peculiarly her own, one of the visitors who were with them; the other and Chesterville were listening to his Lordship relating a bon mot of his own on some election matters, at which, as was expected of them, both his auditors immoderately laughed. On the entrance of Ethelinde, whose heart sunk still more at the sound of mirth so discordant to her feelings, each of the party enquired in the usual way after her, and expressed satisfaction at seeing her well enough to come down to breakfast, but none of them observed or were enough interested in her looks to remark the eyes, filled with expres-

five concern, nor the pale and trembling lips with which she returned their compliments.

. Breakfast over, Chesterville, who was going out to shoot with his uncle, rose to leave the room. Ethelinde then acquired courage to say —“ Brother, may I speak with you before you go?”

“ Aye,” replied he, “ to be sure you may ; but make haste, Ethy, because you see my Lord waits for me.” He then withdrew to a window. Ethelinde wished he would quit the room, but however followed him, and said, taking the French paper from her pocket —“ Here is a newspaper which has almost killed me ; read it, and you will not wonder at my terror and concern.”

“ A newspaper ! what about ?” He took it, however, and hastily ran over the sentence she pointed out. “ Oh !” cried he, when he had read it, “ ’tis not worth while, child, to make yourself uneasy about this ; there are a hundred people of the name, I dare say, in that part of the world. Never fret about it, because it is a thousand to one if it is Charles ; and if it should be, your teizing yourself will
be

be of no manner of use. Hang the paper; I wish it had been burnt. Depend upon it, however, that it is not authentic. Do not be frightened about it; and I would advise you neither to think of it yourself, or to speak of it to Mr. Harcourt or Mrs. Montgomery. We shall have nothing but boring conjectures and lamentations; and after all, I dare swear there's not a word of truth in it."

Then with an air which made it too evident that he cared not whether there was or no, so long as his own enjoyments were not flattened or impeded by being obliged to affect concern he did not feel, he turned away; and apologizing to Lord Hawkhurst for having detained him, he left the room. Little reason as Ethelinde lately had to expect tenderness and feeling from her brother, she was quite overwhelmed by this new instance of his careless ingratitude. She would have gone back to her room, there to indulge her tears; but after an attempt to cross that where she was, she sat down in the first chair she reached, and fell into an agony of tears.

This immediately drew towards her the attention of Lady Hawkhurst, the young ladies, and Victorine, who, with more eagerness than interest, enquired what was the matter. She might easily have imputed her tears to the effect of what had happened to her the evening before; but she was in no condition to reflect on consequences, and pointing to Victorine the account which had so alarmed her, she besought in broken accents the younger of her cousins to assist her to her room.

When she was gone, Victorine read the paragraph, and explained to the ladies who remained the engagements between Ethelinde and her cousin Montgomery. She spoke of his loss, as she really felt it, with concern that dissolved her also into tears; while Lady Hawkhurst, shrewd, discerning, and ever alive to what might promote her favourite views, saw, after a moment's consideration, all the advantages which the grand project she now had in hand might derive from this circumstance. Harcourt was every moment expected. The probability that he had lost his nephew, for whom he had told her he destined
a large

a large share of his fortune, made her success at once more probable and more desirable; and the tender sympathy which Lady Belle might express, would open to his imagination a compensation for present grief in the future society of so tender hearted and amiable a young woman.

Struck with these ideas, and totally regardless of the pain she might inflict either on Ethelinde or the object of her experiment, she began in flowing accents to lament the unhappy catastrophe, of which she would suffer nobody to raise the least doubt. Her affected concern redoubled the sobs of Victorine; and Lady Belle, who perfectly understood her part, saw Mr. Harcourt's carriage drive up to the door, and was drowned immediately in such tears as a good actress can with little effort produce.

Harcourt was shewn into the room by the servant, but stopped at the door in amaze and concern, for he saw his daughter leaning against Lady Helen in an agony of sorrow, while Lady Hawkhurst held salts to her nose; and on the other side of the room her eldest daughter

daughter reclined her head on a table, and seemed equally overwhelmed with grief.

“Good God!” exclaimed Harcourt, “what has happened? Victorine are you ill? is Ethelinde worse? Where is she? I beseech you keep me not in suspense!”

“Oh, Sir! oh, Mr. Harcourt!” exclaimed Lady Hawkhurst, in a theatrical tone, “how shall we relate a circumstance which has truly pierced all our hearts?”

“Speak for God’s sake,” cried Harcourt impatiently; “speak; is Ethelinde living and well?”

Lady Belle, who thought she could now appear to advantage, rose with an affectation of weakness; and approaching Harcourt, she held with one hand her handkerchief to her eyes, and laid the other gently on her arm—“Dear Sir,” cried she, “be patient. Ethelinde, my lovely, my beloved cousin is well, and will, I hope—I sincerely hope, survive the severest blow a sensible heart can feel; that of losing the dear object of its tenderness!” As if this idea was too terrible, she now retreated, and sat down in a chair; while Harcourt,

court, more and more astonished and terrified, could only in an hurried and inarticulate way again implore them all to explain themselves. This at length Lady Hawkhurst did; and Harcourt, trembling as he read the paper which she put into his hands, grew extremely sick when he had finished it, and said in a voice hardly audible—"It is, I fear, too true. So fade for ever all my fond hopes from that quarter! Oh! my poor sister!"

The change in his countenance now gave an opportunity to Lady Hawkhurst to insist on his swallowing a cordial she brought him, which Lady Belle presented with her own hand, and sighing as she did it, cried—"Why does fate thus persecute the amiable and worthy! I am told that the dear friend you lament was every thing that can delight the eye or charm the heart of woman."

"He was more, Madam," said Harcourt: "he was all that a parent could ask of heaven; the pride of his family, of his country, and of human nature."

"Like *you* too in his figure," interrupted
Lady

Lady Hawkhurst. "Oh! heaven, what a cruel blow!"

Harcourt was unfitted to return the compliments they intended him; he was indeed hardly conscious of where he was, but sat silent and motionless, till Victorine, whose concern was real, approached him—"Look not so distressed my dear father," cried she, as she threw her arms round him. He pressed her to his breast; and bursting into tears, felt himself so much relieved that he was able to rise and ask leave to retire with her for a few moments into another room.

At the door, however, he met Ethelinde, who had passed the short time she had been absent in a very different manner. She had called off her thoughts a moment from herself to the mother and uncle of Montgomery; and in feeling with such poignancy her own anxious terrors, forgot not those which would overwhelm them, and probably be fatal to one or both. Her genuine love for *him*, made all he had loved doubly dear to her in that moment of distress; and she had determined, however difficult and painful the effect might be,

be, to conceal from them the anguish that preyed on her spirits, at least till confirmation of the mournful news made dissimulation impossible.

But though she had collected fortitude enough to descend with some composure to receive Mr. Harcourt, it vanished at once, when on meeting him she saw expressed in his countenance that he had already learned all she wished to conceal from him. It struck her at once that he had had it authenticated by some other means; and the faint hope which had hitherto supported her vanishing at once, her spirits could contend no longer; a mortal paleness was on her face; her eyes closed; and she would have fallen on the ground, had he not stepped towards her and supported her to a chair. It was, however, some minutes before she recovered, and many more before he could convince her that he knew nothing of Montgomery but what he had learned of the ladies who had received him. This conviction seemed a little to relieve her; and as it was still possible to keep the circumstance a secret from Mrs. Montgomery,

Lady Newenden will soon be so publicly known, that it is as unnecessary as painful for me to dwell on it to you. For myself, I am too certainly very wretched; but I have infinite consolation in reflecting that I endeavoured to save her, and that I deserved to succeed. Freed, therefore, from all self reproach, I can encounter with firmness the uneasy task before me. The ensuing winter will disengage me from an unhappy woman, whom I still think of with pity, and the rest of my life must be dedicated to those beloved children who are not less dear to me than if their mother had deserved my affection. May I not say, my lovely friend, that I have also much soothing consolation in expecting from *you* that gentle pity which only friendship can give to my sick heart; and which, pure and angelic as it is, your happy Montgomery will himself allow you to bestow on your unfortunate and faithful

E. NEWENDEN."

The uneasiness of Ethelinde was greatly increased by this intelligence. It seemed as if

if calamity was ever to overwhelm, in some form or other, those she most loved, and who most merited her affection. She passed some hours alone in the most melancholy reflections. Mrs. Montgomery then sent up to beg to see her; and she wiped the tears from her eyes, and endeavoured to hide the traces of that anguish which preyed on her spirits. The letter, however, of Sir Edward Newenden, it was necessary to communicate to her friend; and to her friendship and concern for him, the uneasiness which Ethelinde found it impossible wholly to disguise, was in a great measure imputed.

When she was alone with Mrs. Montgomery, the part she was obliged to sustain was rendered sometimes almost insupportable by continual conversation about Montgomery; who, as he occupied all his mother's thoughts, engrossed also her discourse. Sometimes desponding and representing every thing that might happen to him in the most melancholy light, she accused herself of rashness and folly for having promoted his voyage; at other times she seemed to wish to be shewn
more

more agreeable visions, and to have the great probability of his return represented to her: while she indulged herself in dwelling on the transports with which she should embrace him; the happiness which would crown her latter days in seeing him united to Ethelinde; and how much the close of her life, amidst a family of his, would repay her for all her sufferings through many years of affliction.

When visions so enchanting possessed her imagination, Ethelinde, who grew every day more convinced of their fallacy, found all her resolution giving way before the shocking idea of a mother thus flattering herself with fond hopes of happiness with him who was already gone for ever; dwelling with pride and exultation on those virtues which had long since received their reward in heaven; and tenderly tracing on her mind the changes which time and climate might have made on that form and those features which were now

“ Perhaps under the ’whelming tide,

“ Visiting the bottom of the monstrous world.”

Still,

Still, whatever it cost her, Ethelinde guarded carefully against betraying what she felt on hearing this conversation. But the effort was too great to be sustained long without a visible alteration in her health. Her only relief was the melancholy resource of talking about Montgomery with Mr. Harcourt, who had written to every quarter from whence information was likely to be obtained, and who now awaited answers with the most painful impatience. But in this she seldom dared indulge herself least it should raise suspicion; and opportunities every day became more rare; for Lord and Lady Hawkhurst and their family had now obtained such a footing, that they seemed to form only one society with the inhabitants of Clare Park. Chesterville, always out on parties, had not yet discovered the motive of his uncle's extraordinary attachment to Mr. Harcourt, and Victorine was too little acquainted with the arts of such a woman as Lady Hawkhurst to guess at all what she was about: but Ethelinde, though she gave up the greatest part of her time to Mrs. Montgomery, saw enough to convince her

her of the nature of her Ladyship's views; and she saw too, not without uneasiness on behalf of her brother, that Harcourt was much more sensible of their attention than on their first acquaintance: and when they were alone, he sometimes spoke of Lady Arabella in terms which made her apprehend it very likely that he might be brought, by no very slow degrees, to console himself for his former misfortunes by a second marriage. Lady Belle wore no rouge; she had taken quite a grave and retired turn; talked only of domestic comforts and the pleasure of improving such a beautiful place as Clare Park; expressed virtuous disgust at the dissipation and abandoned morals of modern young men; and declared that happiness in her idea consisted in living in elegant retirement, with a man of sense, who had passed the summer of life, and whose mind was softened and refined by that knowledge of the world which too often hardens and corrupts it: and when she had drawn a picture of Mr. Harcourt, she would look at him tenderly, sigh deeply, and then, as if conscious of what she had done,
leave

leave the room in confusion. Her person was fine, and her manners very insinuating; and Ethelinde every day beheld the progress she made in the heart of Harcourt—an heart, which feeling every hour more severely the vacancy made in it by the death of his son, by his daughter's dissipated turn, which made her incapable of filling it or returning his affection, and now by the too probable loss of his nephew, naturally sought some other object on which to repose; and could hardly fail of being flattered in believing he had met that object in the form of an handsome and amiable woman. His fortune was so large that he thought he might marry without injustice to his daughter, on whose child he proposed making very large settlements; and to this idea he by degrees familiarized his mind, till he determined to consult his sister and Ethelinde on it; for on their advice, judgment, and disinterested affection, he had such reliance that he would take no step of such consequence as that of opening his intentions to Lord Hawkhurst till he had consulted them. The first opportunity, therefore, that

he had of being alone with Ethelinde he took occasion to complain of the continual absence of Chesterville, and his enormous expences—
“ I would not pain *you*, my dearest Ethelinde, for the world: but in very truth, my fortune, large as it is, must soon be considerably injured, and I am sure you think that were I to suffer this to go on I should be guilty of great injustice to little Harry, to his mother, and to myself; to say nothing of my sister and of our beloved Montgomery, who, as I will still hope, may yet return to us.”

“ Certainly,” replied Ethelinde, “ I do think so; and I have often regretted the incurable passion which my brother seems to have for expensive pleasures.”

“ 'Tis less,” continued Harcourt, “ what comes usually under the denomination of pleasures that I regret, than his constant attendance at gaming tables; of which, though pains have been taken to conceal it from me, I am well informed. I know, that notwithstanding the large sums with which he has been supplied by my order, he has raised
money

money* by those methods which have been fatal to so many young men. I own this information has made me very uneasy; nor does it indeed much contribute to my comfort to see the avidity with which Victorine enters into a style of life as injurious to her as displeasing to me. I am often ill; I expected in her to find a nurse, who, from love and gratitude, would have delighted to attend me. I am often low spirited, and oppressed with that sort of melancholy which the soft and consoling voice of affection can alone remove. Does my daughter attend or console me? Alas no! She is either out on some party of pleasure, or surrounded at home by giddy creatures like herself, and idle young men, who would ridicule any attention she shewed to her father; yet she has not a bad heart; she does not want feeling; and Chesterville might have rendered her as lovely in her mind as her person."

Ethelinde assented to this; and then Harcourt proceeded to tell her that ill health made a London residence so unfit for him that he had resolved to remain in the country;

that Mrs. Montgomery having declined taking her residence wholly with him, he should then be left quite alone; and in short that he had very serious thoughts of marrying Lady Belle Chesterville; as he believed, that notwithstanding her high birth and education, she had all that composure of mind and all those sentiments which would render him happy—"And," continued he, "it seems to me that this step is not only likely to secure me an easy and tender companion for the remainder of my days, but will also be the most certain means of convincing your brother of his error before he has farther involved himself. When I am married, he will find it more difficult, if not impossible, to raise money on the prospect of inheriting my estate, and I shall take care that before the affair is concluded, such a part of it shall be settled on his son, and such a part on Victorine and himself during their lives, as shall secure to them, even if I should have a second family, a very sufficient and even splendid income. On my sister also I shall settle one of the farms I have in Staffordshire, which produces a clear
four

four hundred a year, and I shall invest in the stocks ten thousand pounds in the names of trustees whom I shall appoint for her and her son."

Ethelinde, though before well convinced, from many observations, that Mr. Harcourt had thought much on this subject, was however surpris'd to find he had so thoroughly arranged his plan. He ceased speaking, and seem'd to expect her answer; she was by no means prepared to give it; and remaining some time silent, he at length said—"Tell me, Ethelinde, what are your sentiments?"

"That you have an undoubted right, Sir, to form any connection which appears to you likely to render you happy."

"Give me then," answer'd he, "with your usual sincerity, your opinion whether your cousin Lady Belle is likely to make such a wife as I expect."

Ethelinde was now cruelly distressed: she knew that her cousin had, to carry her point, been acting a part altogether unlike her own character, which was spirited, arrogant, volatile, and dissipated; she knew that in town

she passed whole nights at the card-table, and was the first in the circle of fashion and gaiety; she knew her incapable of real affection, selfish, and ambitious; and that she was extremely artful her present success evinced. Ethelinde, however, was very unwilling to say all or any part of what she knew; she was equally unwilling to say what she did not think; and yet to evade such a question was difficult, without giving Harcourt reason to believe that she was either disingenuous or interested.

Again she paused; but Harcourt again pressing her to speak, she said, that never having been much with her cousins she was incompetent to judge of their characters, but that Lady Arabella appeared at present very amiable; then hastening from a point on which she could not speak to her own satisfaction, she asked whether his conversation with her was in confidence, or whether she was at liberty to speak of it.

“ You may mention it if you please,” replied he; “ I mean to speak of it myself to my sister; and for the rest of the family I think
it

it will come less awkwardly from you than from me."

Mr. Harcourt then went up to the apartment of Mrs. Montgomery, and Ethelinde into the park to consider what she should do. Her brother was forty miles from home; Victorine was also absent on a visit; the return of both was uncertain, and she well understood that there was no time to be lost. She determined, therefore, to write instantly to Chesterville; and having done so, and sent her letter away express, she returned to Mrs. Montgomery, whom she found very uneasy at the conversation she had had with her brother.

"You know me, my Ethelinde, too well," said she, "to make it necessary for me to declare to you that my sentiments on this matter are wholly disinterested; but this Lady Belle—shall I tell you very simply that I do not like her? She seems to me to suffer a perpetual struggle between her real and her assumed character; and then Lady Hawkhurst is so haughty, so loud, so dictatorial, so much of the veteran woman of fashion—she seems to have no principle, if I may so express

prefs myself, but interest, and to have no feelings but those of pride and ambition. Even her affections for her children have taken this turn; and I am convinced that she would rejoice to see them great, though certain they were miserable. What will become of my poor brother, if he finds himself deceived; and, when it is too late, discovers that instead of a dove he has purchased a bird whose fine plumage covers the spirit of a vulture."

"Indeed," replied Ethelinde, "I greatly dread it." She then told Mrs. Montgomery her real opinion of the character of Lady Belle; and they agreed that unless Chefterville managed better than they expected he would do, Mr. Harcourt would certainly fall into the snare prepared for him. "As for myself," said Mrs. Montgomery, "I am determined to return as soon as possible to Grafmere. There I am—not happy indeed—for happiness and I are perhaps divided for ever; but I am at least easier than here; where, indulgent as my brother is to my love of solitude, I am exposed to frequent interruptions
from

from persons who, as they mean only civility, I cannot offend by refusing their society. I am unwilling also to appear busy in regard to this marriage. If my brother is determined upon it, as I believe he is, my opposition will incur only his dislike, and that I cannot bear; I shall certainly become hateful to Lady Belle, who will probably obtain influence enough over him to deaden all other affections; and therefore, Ethelinde, I shall fix on next Tuesday to begin our journey."

Ethelinde assured her that her wish had long been to return to Grafmere. She knew that before the day Mrs. Montgomery had named Chesterville would return, and that she should have acquitted herself as far as possible in giving him an opportunity of attempting at least to prevent a marriage so fatal to the prospects his ambition had laid out before him: for the rest, had she been convinced that Lady Belle would have made Mr. Harcourt happy, she would have thought it inexcusable to endeavour, liberal as his intentions were in regard to her brother, to have dissuaded him from the marriage.

The rage and agitation of Chesterville on

his return are not to be described. It was with the utmost difficulty that Ethelinde could prevent his going to expostulate in very unguarded terms with Mr. Harcourt. On Lady Hawkhurst he lavished every term of dislike which his anger and threatened disappointment dictated; and instead of considering what he should do to counteract her projects, he continued to rail against her for having formed them; while Ethelinde, sorry as she was for his uneasiness, could hardly help thinking he was in some measure justly punished for the avidity with which he had cultivated acquaintance and friendship with the family who had neglected his father in the bitter hour of adversity, and had apparently forgotten, when he himself most needed their friendship, those claims of kindred which they assiduouſly renewed the moment that they saw him in the sunshine of fortune. This, however, was no time to remind him of the folly of his conduct; and all Mrs. Montgomery and Ethelinde could do, was to endeavour to appease him, and point out to him the means to prevent what he feared. All his jealousy and mistrust of them, which had made him so
cold

cold and indifferent even to his sister, now vanished; and he besought Mrs. Montgomery, with an earnestness almost abject, to stay and assist Victorine in dissuading her father from this dreaded marriage: but this she positively though politely refused; and on the day she had settled to go, she took an affectionate leave of Mr. Harcourt (to whom, in a private conference, she had insisted much on the necessity of being well informed of the real character of her to whom he meant to entrust the peace of his future life,) and then with Ethelinde departed for her cottage at Grafmire, notwithstanding all the entreaties of Chester-ville and Victorine that they would stay, and the reluctance of Mr. Harcourt to part with them.

C H A P.

CHAPTER XII.

IN the quiet solitude of Grasmere, where every object served to bring before her the image of Montgomery and the happiness which she once hoped to enjoy in living there with him—hopes that she now believed were vanished for ever—the spirits of Ethelinde seemed likely wholly to forsake her. To conceal her terrors from Mrs. Montgomery was a task which every hour became more difficult and more painful; but she reflected that she was by this dissimulation saving from insanity or from death one so dear to him; and she besought heaven to give her strength to repress and conceal her own sorrow so long as she could fulfil any duty towards the mother of him she adored.

That mother, with a mind strong beyond her sex, and with all the resources of comfort offered by religion, was yet hourly sinking under the anguish which uncertainty inflicted. Often she accused herself of having hastily sacrificed

crificed him to unworthy motives ; and whenever she had courage to speak upon the subject, which she could not always do, she lamented her precipitation in terms of the bitterest regret. Her anxiety for letters now became excessive ; and Ethelinde was alarmed by every one she opened lest she should receive news of fatal import. Mrs. Montgomery, often unable to contend with the dreadful pain of anxiety, was compelled to have recourse to opiates to obtain sleep, and sometimes preferred entire solitude even to the company of Ethelinde.

For some days the uneasiness she was in about her brother added greatly to the distress of Mrs. Montgomery, as well as to that of Ethelinde. Its object was then changed by their hearing that he had been seized with a return of his usual illness, which had been so violent for some time as to reduce him to the point of death, and that in consequence of his physician's advice he was going to Bath. The accounts they afterwards received from thence spoke only of his amending health ; and the tenderness Victorine had shewn towards him seemed to have had its effect in detaching his
mind

mind at least for the present from thoughts of a marriage so fatal to her interest, and probably to his own repose.

The situation of Sir Edward Newenden was an additional weight on the mind of Ethelinde. Lady Newenden's conduct was now become matter of discussion in the newspapers. Ethelinde had a short letter from him to inform her he was arrived in London: he was unhappy; and her soft heart bled for his unhappiness amidst the superior calamities that oppressed her. Whenever Mrs. Montgomery desired to be wholly alone, Ethelinde, who never otherwise left her, wandered away to those scenes where she could indulge herself most in the sad luxury of recalling Montgomery forcibly to her mind. Sometimes she sat under the willow she had been so fond of; it's withered leaves were now falling, and it's long flexible branches, as they waved in the wind around her, seemed to whisper only sorrow; but her most frequent walks were along the edge of the lake, now often ruffled by wild gusts from the hills, and darkened by heavy clouds, to the creek where Montgomery had snatched her from death. A group
of

elder and birch grew near it; and when they left Grasmere, they had afforded a *de-
 cade* over its grassy borders; but the little foliage they retained was of a faint yellow, forming a mournful but not unpleasing contrast with the dark hollies and half-leafless oaks that started from the mass of rocks which arose behind them. Here she frequently lamented that she had not perished. "Had I died then," said she, "how much of suffering had I escaped! Oh! Montgomery! why did you rescue me from death to survive my father, to see my friends wretched, and now to weep over the memory of happiness lost for ever! But for your fatal affection for me, you might now have been the support of your widowed mother. 'Tis I have destroyed you; yet I live to believe it, and may linger many years vainly to lament you!"

Another of her melancholy wanderings was longer: it was to the seat which Sir Edward Newenden had made in the cliff above Grasmere Park, where she met Montgomery in the first days of their attachment. It was endeared to her by a thousand tender recollections.

tions. There Montgomery had first told her he loved her; and there, after she left Grafmere to attend on her father, he had been accustomed to sit and think of her. The seat was a little cave in a soft sandy rock; over its unequal arch the ivy, mingled with clematis, wild hop, briony, and woody nightshade, formed festoons which half concealed the entrance. Within was a rude table, on which Montgomery had told her he had written those little pieces of poetry which she had with so much pleasure heard him repeat; and there yet remained a memorial of his usual way of passing his time in this sequestered spot, for on one of the masses of rock he had engraved her cypher. On this she now perpetually gazed, leaning her head on the oak table before her. The waterfall, which was now swelled by autumnal rains into a rapid torrent, gushing from the alpine heights above, and seeking its way to the lake among the rocks immediately near her, at once encreased and soothed her sadness. Amid the rushing of the torrent, and the hollow sighing of the wind that swelled its sound, she often sunk into such absence of mind, and yielded so entirely

entirely to the impressions of fancy, that she believed she really heard the voice of Montgomery.

In these reveries she was sometimes so absorbed, that neither the threatened storm nor the approach of night had power to awaken her from them; but the necessity of attending Mrs. Montgomery, to whom she generally read an hour or two before she went to her bed, made her, before night fall, quit this scene of sorrowful contemplation, which, as she left, she usually uttered an apostrophe to Montgomery.—“I go,” cried she, as if he really heard her—“I go to acquit myself of my duty to your mother. Oh! come with me, beloved of both our hearts! and in dreams at least let me see thee, though we in this world may meet no more!”

Thus passed the month of October. The dreary weather of the following month, tho' it often wrapped in blue mists the scene she so much loved, and choaked with leaves the narrow way that wound among the rocks towards it, prevented not her solitary rambles. The very horrors of the surrounding landscape now afforded her the only gratification she

was capable of tasting, and thus in the words of an exquisite modern poet, she sometimes addressed the wild and forlorn scene around her—

“ To this sad soul more welcome are thy glooms,

“ Than Spring’s green bowers, or Summer’s gaudy
blooms,

“ Nor asks an heart that only breathes to sigh,

“ A warmer mansion—or a kinder sky.”*

It was now, however, near the end of the months; and the frosts, which were now often severe, threatened to make her beloved spot inaccessible by spreading sheets of ice over the mountain path. This approaching deprivation made her with more avidity enjoy her favorite scene while it was possible; and cold as it now was, she had placed herself there early one morning, when her eyes were suddenly struck with an unusual volume of smoke ascending from the chimneys of Grafmere Abbey, which lay immediately beneath her. The house had appeared till now hardly inhabited; the windows were seldom opened, and no fire seemed to be made but in the

* Miss Seward’s Louisa.

housekeeper's room at one end of it: Ethelinde had sent several times, since her present abode at the cottage, to enquire after Mrs. Dickenson, but had avoided going thither because her spirits were unequal to the questions which she knew the good woman would ask. She had now no other idea than that the rooms were airing on account of the damp weather; but as she thought it possible that Mrs. Dickenson might have heard of Sir Edward and the children since she had, she determined to go down to the house to enquire. She descended, therefore, by the way that led towards the abbey, crossed the lawn, and entered by a glass door which opened into a parlour. She traversed it, and hearing somebody move in the study which adjoined it, she concluded it to be the housekeeper, and opening the door, was struck with the sight of Sir Edward Newenden himself, pale and emaciated, sitting in his dressing gown at a table, on which he was writing. He lifted not up his eyes on her opening the door. The room was long and somewhat dark; and as she almost involuntarily approached him, he said in a low voice, still without moving

moving his eyes from the paper—"Dickenson, let Matthew get ready to carry this letter to Mrs. Montgomery."

"Sir Edward!" said Ethelinde, in a faint tone.

At the sound of her voice he dropped his pen, started up, and crying as he advanced—"My Ethelinde! my angel!" he clasped her to his heart. The suddenness of the interview, and the pale and dejected figure of her benefactor, were together too much for her feeble spirits, and she almost fainted in his arms.

He placed her on a chair; and as soon as she seemed restored to her senses, he, who appeared not entirely to possess his own, cried—"You know then the circumstance of which I thought it would be my lot, unwillingly, and with an aching heart, to inform you; but oh why would you in such a state of mind come so far?"

"Know what?" falteringly asked Ethelinde.—"What do you suppose I know? Lady Newenden? is it of her?" Then the idea that what he alluded to related to Montgomery, confusedly entered her mind.—"Or is

is it," continued she, "is it—I dare not ask—the French account about which I wrote to you—the confirmation—the—"

She struggled for breath to go on, but could not. Her eyes were fixed with a look of wildness and horror on Sir Edward. She grasped one of his hands eagerly in hers.—“Tell me,” cried she, “tell me, I conjure you. Certainty, however dreadful, I could, I think I could better bear than this terrible suspense.”

“The information that paper contained, my Ethelinde, is unhappily too true. When I received your letter, I made enquiry at Paris. The accounts I have from thence leave no doubt——”

“It is enough—it is enough,” cried Ethelinde, “I cannot hear particulars.” A deadly paleness was on her face, a shuddering convulsive sigh burst from her heart; but she was incapable of shedding tears; and Sir Edward beheld with terror the wild and glazed look with which her eyes seemed to follow round the room some imaginary figure. More alarmed by this still and silent horror than he would have been at the most violent expressions

sions of grief, he endeavoured to awaken her from the heavy shock which seemed to have locked up her senses."

"Ethelinde," cried he, "for mercy's sake recollect yourself: what have I told you that you did not before know, at least that you had not too much reason to suspect? Remember, I beseech you, what you owe to the mother of him you lament!—of him to whom your sorrows are now useless. Remember what you owe to yourself, and to your surviving friends. There is one at least to whom the sight of you, in your present state, is more dreadful, more insupportable than his own misfortunes."

Unconscious of what he had said, unknowing what she answered, Ethelinde now with the same wild look gazed a moment on the face of Sir Edward; and repeating his last words, cried—"Misfortunes! what misfortunes? is any body unfortunate but me? no! no! Mrs. Montgomery and I bear them all between us!"

"Indeed, Ethelinde," said he, "I cannot support this!" He left her, and walked to the other end of the room. "Good God!"
whispered

whispered he to himself, "what shall I do with her? If I could provoke her to tears—to exclamation—any thing were better than this alarming stupor."

He now again walked towards her.—"I thought, Ethelinde," said he gravely, as he again approached her—"I thought you had some regard for me. I find I was cruelly mistaken. You will not even allow me the privilege of weeping with you. You forget that Montgomery was my friend; that I loved him as my brother; admired his character, and honoured his virtues. Would to God his fate had been more fortunate, or rather would I could have exchanged my destiny for his. Life to *him* was of value, for *you* loved him; to me it is a torment, for I am bereft of every thing that rendered it desirable, except those dear unfortunate and motherless little ones, for whom I hoped to have found a friend in you. But you reject us and forget us all."

The first intelligence, conveying the certainty of what she dreaded, had given a blow to the heart of Ethelinde, which had stunned all her senses. In a few moments, recollec-

tion,

tion, roused by the sorrowful vehemence of Sir Edward's manner, returned, and a violent burst of tears relieved her. Sir Edward, glad to see her weep, attempted not to check the course of her tears, but as her heart seemed as if it would burst, he thought it better to call the housekeeper, and quit her himself till the violence of her grief subsided. He therefore went himself and sent in Mrs. Dickenson, who sat silently by her; and after a dreadful fit of crying, she sunk into a more quiet state, and recollected that Mrs. Montgomery would probably be alarmed at her stay. She enquired the hour; and being told that it was about one o'clock, she desired to see Sir Edward, who immediately attended her. As he approached her, she held out her hand to him.—“My dear Sir Edward,” said she, with as much steadiness of voice as she could acquire, “I believe I have been ungrateful. Pardon me; I am too wretched to excite any thing but pity. You are not angry with me?”

“Angry, my dear Ethelinde,” replied he, pressing her hand to his lips. “Is it possible you could for a moment suppose it? I thank God

God that you are calmer; exert not yourself to talk, but endeavour to bear with patience an inevitable misfortune. Nothing is so useless as the consolation usually offered.—I attempt not to console you.—I cannot if I would!” A deep and convulsive sigh rendered almost inarticulate the answer of Ethelinde.—“ Ah! Sir Edward, there is another person to console whom it will be *as* difficult. Poor Mrs. Montgomery!—thus ends then that miserable uncertainty which you have been so little able to bear; thus ends the last hope of your days. How shall I tell her? Sir Edward, I feel it to be impossible.—I can never relate to her a catastrophe of which she has yet no idea—I should die in the attempt!”

“ Do not then attempt it,” said he. “ And yet,” interrupted Ethelinde, “ to whom can I entrust it?—Now, perhaps at this moment, she wonders at my stay.—She will mistrust something, let me therefore return immediately.”

Sir Edward, glad to find she had now her perfect recollection, sat down by her; and, after consulting a moment with the old

housekeeper, they determined, that, as she so anxiously desired to return, he would take her to the cottage in his post-chaise, and there be governed by the situation in which he found Mrs. Montgomery whether he should discover to her her misfortunes, or send for Mr. Harcourt to be with her before he overwhelmed her with tidings so insupportable. To this plan Ethelinde agreed: Sir Edward withdrew to give orders for the chaise, and Mrs. Dickenson assisted Ethelinde to prepare for going; her own trembling hands and streaming eyes being but of little use to her. She then tottered down stairs, and was put into the carriage. The coach way was near three miles round; and as they went Sir Edward had time to exhort Ethelinde to preserve, as much as she could, the appearance of composure before the unhappy mother. "Remember," said he, "that a very sudden shock may deprive her of life, or of her senses; you consider her health and repose as sacred deposits left you by Montgomery; you will not therefore consult them less now, than while you had yet hopes of rendering
to

to him an account of your trust." Ethelinde acknowledged that she ought to do as he directed, and, though trembling and faint, assured him she would try at it. Nothing served so much to recall her own fortitude as the recollection that, without it, she must see her venerable and beloved friend sink under her misfortunes without being able to help her; and this consideration induced her to restrain, though it could not diminish, the anguish of her heart.

When they arrived at the cottage, they found Mrs. Montgomery at first a little surprized by seeing a carriage at her door so unexpectedly. The countenance too of Ethelinde would have alarmed her, had not she supposed that the change she observed there was owing to the unexpected arrival of Sir Edward, for whom she knew that Ethelinde felt so tender an interest.

Though relieved by the apparent composure of Mrs. Montgomery from that immediate dread of the future which had weighed so heavily on the spirits of Ethelinde, the painful remembrance of the past quite con-

quered her strength; and as soon as Sir Edward was gone, who had engaged Mrs. Montgomery in conversation relative to his own affairs, she went up to her chamber, saying only, that her walk, the cold, and the sudden sight of Sir Edward Newenden, had made her ill. Alone, and in her bed, the certainty—the dreadful certainty that she had lost Montgomery for ever, returned in all its force. Inevitable evils, it is said, are always borne the best; but Ethelinde, amidst all that anxiety which had reduced her mind to the tenderest weakness, and exposed it to all the terrors of fancy, had yet, in the bottom of her heart, cherished an hope that he still had escaped, and would return to her such as her affection delighted in representing him. That latent hope was now destroyed; the happiness of her life was blasted for ever by the very means which she had fondly flattered herself would secure it; and she had now no comfort but in thinking that she had done her duty, rather than yielded to her inclination, when she reluctantly consented to his going. There is, in extreme distress, no other source of
consolation

consolation but in reflecting that duties strictly executed will finally be rewarded, though here, for some reasons we are unable to penetrate, misery is too frequently the portion of those who most religiously adhere to them: the tender mind of Ethelinde now sought from heaven that comfort which nothing on earth could give her; and determining to consecrate the rest of her life to the beloved memory of him who was thus snatched from her, she found some degree of courage gradually return, and meditated how to soften the dreadful blow that was yet to fall on her dear unhappy friend.

Her intended precautions were however useless. The next day after her interview with Sir Edward, Mrs. Montgomery opened a letter which contained the fatal information. The sorrows of those advanced in life are silent; but prey deeply on the heart. if it is not yet hardened by long and repeated calamity. Mrs. Montgomery felt, or fancied she felt, that she should survive only a very short time, him for whom alone she had lived—for whose sake only life had any charms; and Ethelinde saw with astonish-

ment, that she bore the certainty of the loss of all she loved with more outward calmness than she had often shewn while she merely apprehended what had now actually happened. Nothing seemed to distress her so much as any attempt to console her, or to persuade her that her own dissolution was distant. She thought of death with that sort of delight which a journey would have given her at the end of which she was sure of meeting her son: and when Ethelinde, with tears and entreaties, often implored her to take medicines prescribed for her, she took them indeed, but smiled at their inefficacy, and sometimes asked Ethelinde “why she wished her so ill as to desire her life?” In a little time she desired to see Sir Edward Newenden, who, after the first interview, came to her, at her request, almost every day; Ethelinde frequently left them together, and went out alone to the wildest spots, where she could weep unseen, and call, unheard, on the beloved name of Montgomery.—She imagined she saw Mrs. Montgomery sinking rapidly to the grave; and believed that she should very soon follow her.

her. Her constitution, never very strong, had been greatly injured by repeated shocks; and she hoped that her youth alone would not support her against the last, and that she should not be left alone in a world where, after the loss of Mrs. Montgomery, she thought she should have nothing for which it would be supportable to live.

Returning from one of these walks, she was surprised to see the post-chaise of Sir Edward Newenden at the door of the cottage, at an hour when he did not usually visit it. On entering the parlour she saw him leaning against the wainscot, with his handkerchief to his eyes, and Mrs. Montgomery seemed mildly remonstrating with him. Seeing it was Ethelinde who entered, he started from the posture he was in, and hurried by her, without speaking, into the garden. "What is the matter with Sir Edward, my dear madam?" said Ethelinde in great astonishment. "Lady Newenden," replied Mrs. Montgomery, "is dead; and, whatever reason he had to detest her, the account of her death, attended with some shocking circumstances which he is unable

to relate, has quite overwhelmed him. I have been trying to argue him into a more composed state of mind; but you see the way he is in."

Shocked and amazed, Ethelinde enquired whether she should go to him.—“No,” replied Mrs. Montgomery, “he seems particularly hurt at the sight of you. It is yet, I fear, no time to attempt to soothe him, or to reason with him: go therefore, my love, up to your own room, and I will send for him in; for in the present state of his mind he should not be alone.”

Mrs. Montgomery then went herself into the garden, and Sir Edward, affected by the interest she took in his sorrows, notwithstanding the heavy pressure of her own, became, on her account, able to command himself; and she had the satisfaction to see him return home more composed than, from the first violent emotions of his grief, was probable. Though the sudden death of a woman he had once loved, of his children's mother, had at first been a severe shock to Sir Edward, his reason soon conquered his concern; and he reflected on the event in a few

few days as on a stroke of providence in his favour, and in that of his children, who must have suffered had the separation by law taken place to which her conduct would have obliged him to recur, and in which he was indeed occupied at the time he received the intelligence from Italy that rendered all his measures unnecessary.

But though he soon subdued his first sorrow, and felt in all its force the comfort his conscience brought to him, which assured him that he had acquitted himself towards his wife with the most perfect integrity, indulged her foibles, and even overlooked her misconduct to a degree of weakness for which his friends had often reproached him, but of which he now thought with pleasure, he could not determine to quit Grasmere or go to London; but, anxious to see his children, he wrote to entreat Mr. Maltravers, in whose care they were left, to send them down to him. The unhappy father of Lady Newenden, who was now taught so severely to repent of his fatal indulgence to her, had not yet recovered the tidings of her death. Without resources but from pre-

sent objects, he had lost the idol to which he had been so many years offering incense, and knew not how to submit to the blow. His wife, to whom he imputed much of the ill conduct of his daughter, was become hateful to him; and he shut himself up in his own apartment, where disappointment and grief incessantly preyed upon his soul. In sending his grandchildren to their father, he wrote a letter with which Sir Edward was much affected. It acknowledged all his kindness to the lost Maria, and recommended her children to his care.—“In the will, a copy of which I enclose to you,” said he, “you will see that I have amply provided for each of your children.—Take care of your girl; she will be as lovely as her unhappy mother.—Give her a better education. They will all be independent of you.—I hope you will so bring them up as that their independence may not make them less worthy. For yourself, Sir Edward, feeling as I do your worth, I have given you what I once intended should be at the disposal of my daughter. Mrs. Maltravers is sufficiently provided for; never suffer your children to
be

be with her.—You will probably marry.—I hear that the young man to whom my niece Chesterville was engaged, is dead.—I wish your choice may be directed to her.—She is a good girl and deserves to be happy—you will make her so; and she will be tender of your children.—I believe I was less kind to her than I ought to have been.—Repentance on that, and many other points, is too late.—I have given her a thousand pounds, and sincerely wish you happy with her;—I shall hardly live to see it, as I think you will not marry till the mourning for the late Lady Newenden is expired.”

To unite himself for ever with Ethelinde—
—with her who had been so long the possessor of an heart which dared not acknowledge the affection he could not conquer, had been the first and most soothing idea that Sir Edward had entertained after he recovered from the first shock which his wife's death gave him. But with whatever delight he cherished this idea, he had not yet ventured to breathe an hint of it even to Mrs. Montgomery. *Every day, however, he

went to the cottage; the children usually accompanied him, and all the fondness which had formerly subsisted between them and Ethelinde was renewed, and even augmented. She found the only pleasure she was capable of tasting in their innocent mirth; and when they were too noisy for Mrs. Montgomery, she took them into her own room, or out to walk with her, leaving Sir Edward to sit with her friend, whose greatest gratification seemed to be in talking about her son; a conversation to which the spirits of Ethelinde were so unequal, that whenever his name was mentioned she was obliged to leave the room. So capricious is grief, that she could not endure to hear the name pronounced by another which she incessantly repeated to herself; and if ever he was spoken of, the languor and sadness which usually hung over her gave way to a momentary impatience, and she fled from the person by whom he was named as if they had done her an injury.

Mr. Maltravers survived only a fortnight after having disposed of his affairs in the manner he had mentioned to Sir Edward.—

He

He gave to his two grandsons thirty thousand pounds each in money, and to his granddaughter twenty; and, leaving to the eldest of the boys the reversion of half his estates in land, he gave the rest, with the exception only of a thousand pounds to Ethelinde and a few inconsiderable legacies, to Sir Edward Newenden; bequeathing to his wife only the seven hundred a year which he had settled on her at her marriage, and a legacy of five hundred pounds for mourning. With this, however, though full of bitterness and resentment, she went to Bath, where she lived at the card table, and got a set of friends in whose society she soon recovered the loss of her husband and her daughter; and in a very few weeks was as gay and as much at ease as if no such misfortune had befallen her. She had no trouble about her grandchildren, whose very existence she would not have been sorry to have forgotten; and in her dress and manner was soon so gay and fashionable, that nobody, unless they very narrowly examined her face, would have believed that she owned the venerable title of grandmother.

Mrs.

Mrs. Montgomery, in every thing her opposite, was evidently though very gradually declining; though she had no complaint but universal languor, her face

“As beauty lingering left its lov'd abode,”

was still most interesting; though so pale that the blood seemed wholly to have forsaken it, except where deep blue veins gave a yet more palid hue to her temples and forehead. Her hair was quite white, a change occasioned rather by sorrow than age; and her eyes had lost their vivacity but not their sweetness: incurable grief, softened by patient resignation, was the character her countenance had taken:—all its animation and spirit was gone; or, if ever it returned for a moment, it was when she spoke of her near approach to that period, when, disengaged from this earth, she should rejoin her two dear Montgomerys—her husband and her son.

Nothing seemed to interest her on earth but the situation of Ethelinde, and of this she now sometimes spoke to Sir Edward; who, gazing on her with tender veneration, and considering her already as a saint, heard her,

her, with mingled pain and pleasure, thus address him on that subject, about a month after the death of Mr. Maltravers.

“ I have been unusually ill to night, my good friend, and I believe my trial will soon be over: you, who know what I have possessed and what I have lost, will not wonder that I feel these symptoms with delight. There is but one point, in my near prospect of death, that distresses me; it is, the condition in which Ethelinde will be left when I am no more.—Her beauty, her sensibility, the softness of her temper, all combine to fill me with uneasiness lest her future life should be even less tranquil than that portion of it that has passed.—I consider her as my daughter; as the sacred trust left me by my son; and I shall meet him in heaven with an alloy of my joy if I leave Ethelinde unhappy and unprotected.”

This was an opportunity beyond the hopes of Sir Edward, who had long meditated how to speak on this subject, but was ever checked by his fears of finding Mrs. Montgomery averse to what he so ardently desired. He now, not without all the tremulous hesitation

tation of doubt and anxiety, related to her his long though hopeless attachment to Ethelinde; the pain it had cost him to conceal what he had vainly attempted to subdue; and that his going abroad was not less on account of Lady Newenden's indiscreet conduct, than to detach himself from the dangerous indulgence of seeing her, whom he then could not wish to call his without a double crime.—“Believe me, however, dear madam,” continued he, “that, incurable as my passion for her is, I would, if our dear Montgomery had lived, have promoted their union; for she loved him, and he was worthy of her love.—They would have been happy! and such is my affection for Ethelinde, that her interest, her felicity, are dearer—far dearer to me than my own.—Yes, I dare assert that what I feel for her is true love; so true, that though the internal conflict has been now above two years preying on my heart, I would have carried my sorrows to the grave in silence, had their communication been likely to wound her sensibility or her husband's peace.”

The

The tears of Mrs. Montgomery testified how deeply Sir Edward's little narrative had affected her: they were both silent a moment, and then he reassumed his discourse.—

“Heaven has disposed otherwise of events than was very lately probable. The heart of Ethelinde, deeply wounded by the loss of him who deserved all her tenderness, will never perhaps again be sensible of love such as she felt for the dear, regretted Montgomery; but her tenderest esteem is, I believe, mine; if you, dear Madam, do not oppose my hopes, she may perhaps, when her present grief is a little softened by time, give me that hand which I consider as the first blessing on earth, and as much of that tender heart as depends on sympathy and friendship.”

“No, Sir Edward,” replied Mrs. Montgomery, after a deep sigh—“I love Ethelinde too well—I esteem you too much, to oppose your hopes. It has, indeed, been part of my mournful contemplations to promote them; and to see her, before I die, in the protection of her best friend. As I feel daily the slow, but certain approach of
the

the hour when we must part, and am well convinced that it cannot long be delayed, I have often been on the point of telling my lovely friend my sentiments on this subject; but hitherto time, instead of meliorating her anguish, seems to have encreased it; and frequently when I begin to speak to her, she flies from me, or throws herself into an agony of tears which precludes all possibility of conversation. The resignation which I am enabled to shew, from the certainty only of soon meeting all I regret to be separated no more, seems to her I believe to arise from coldness; for I can see that she is often offended and surpris'd at the calmness with which I speak of my son, and would I think love me more if I expressed what I suffer instead of sacrificing my grief to God! and submitting with patience to his irrevocable though heavy decree.—Judge therefore, whether while she is in such a temper of mind, I can name to her a proposal which she would think an injury to the memory of her lover—I will however try what is to be done; and believe me, Sir Edward, that you are the only man on earth to whose protection I would give

give Ethelinde, the only one who is in my eyes worthy of a place in that heart which has been occupied by the image of Charles Montgomery.”

Too much affected to continue the conversation, she now left the room. Faithful however to her promise, and dreading least death, which seemed inevitable, should prevent her executing what she thought her duty towards her friend, she seized the first moment they were alone and composed, to relate to Ethelinde the conversation she had had with Sir Edward Newenden.

Ethelinde, recollecting all that had formerly passed, had very little doubt of Sir Edward's views before Mrs. Montgomery undertook to be his advocate, but so fondly was her whole soul dedicated to the idea of Montgomery, that she had long since determined never to listen to any proposals of marriage, but to pass her whole life as his widow. She was shocked, as Mrs. Montgomery had foreseen, at the first mention of Sir Edward's proposal, and even felt resentment against her for having listened to it. “ You know, dear Madam,” said she, as soon as she recovered her voice,
“ you

“ you know how sincere a friendship I have for Sir Edward—you know all the obligations I owe him: to his care my dying father gave me!—to him I am indebted even for my subsistence since I became fatherless. I love him as the tenderest, best of brothers—had he been really my brother I could not more affectionately love him. But feeling as I feel for another, who, though dead, is not less the object of my everlasting attachment, can I think of giving my hand to Sir Edward Newenden? since indeed, I have not a heart to bestow, and he deserves to possess one undivided by any other affection. Renew not then again the only conversation which I can listen to from you without pleasure.” Discouraged by this answer, which was immediately communicated to him, but not despairing of an alteration in her sentiments, Sir Edward long forbore to speak himself to Ethelinde on the subject nearest his heart: but the silent dejection into which he sunk, affected Ethelinde more than the most studied eloquence exerted in his favour could have done. She sometimes, in seeing how greatly he was changed, accused herself of ingratitude towards

towards a man whose genuine love and unwearied friendship deserved that she should sacrifice to him at least the appearance of that regret which she felt would last for ever; but then the idea of Montgomery who had perished, only because he sought to acquire fortune for her, returned in all its force, and she fancied she heard him reproach her in mournful accents for thinking even a moment of giving to another that faith which had been solemnly given to him: and her whole soul recoiled from the thoughts of entering into another engagement, even with Sir Edward Newenden.

Four months passed, during which Sir Edward found that far from losing any part of that sorrow which the loss of Montgomery had immediately occasioned, Ethelinde felt it rather heavier. His love, encreased by this proof of her steady affection, knew no bounds; and had arisen to an height that in a less regulated mind might have amounted to frenzy. The suspense he was in between hope, that time might produce some alteration in his favour, and fear lest Ethelinde should

continue

continue obstinately to reject him, preyed incessantly on his health, and totally altered his temper: he now sought only solitude; sick disgust overtook him in all society where Ethelinde was not; and where she was, he found in her looks, her tone of voice, her gentle attention to him, fewel for the fire that consumed him. His affairs called him to London: he left his children in the care of Ethelinde; and hastening thither, tried to lose in the hurry of business, and among the friends with whom he used to live, the acuteness of his pain. But he found every body troublesome and fatiguing.—Business appeared unusually tedious and intricate, and society insupportably insipid. The meeting he was obliged to have with Woolaston's creditors, who had seized every thing and left Mrs. Woolaston in extreme distress, contributed to harass his mind and exhaust his spirits. He contrived, however, to rescue some part of his sister's fortune from the talons of the vultures who had seized it; and having fixed her at his own house at Denham, and so settled with her husband that he was never again to molest her,

her, (for, not content with robbing her of her fortune, he had treated her extremely ill,) and having secured her an income sufficient for her support in the way she chose to live in, he hurried over the other matters that called him to London as quickly as possible, and returned to Grasmere Abbey;—more thoroughly convinced than ever that he could not exist without Ethelinde, and determined to bring his fate to a crisis the first opportunity he should have of speaking to her alone.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XIII.

WITH this disposition Sir Edward Newenden went early the next morning after his arrival at Grasmere to the cottage of Mrs. Montgomery. He found her greatly changed in the fortnight he had been absent: she was sensible of it herself; and repeated to him her concern that she should quit the world without seeing the two persons happy for whom she was most solicitous. “I have a letter,” continued she, “from my brother, who is, I thank God, so much recovered from his illness that he promises me a visit, and Victorine and Chesterville come with him. He at length tastes of some tranquillity, and I shall embrace him before I die. He joins with me, dear Sir Edward, in wishing that Ethelinde may be your’s; perhaps the united voice of all her friends may influence her to reward the merit of the living, since the dead are not to be recalled. I am persuaded that my Montgomery himself, if happy spirits are
conscious

conscious of what passes in this world, would approve of her giving to you her hand; and that he would not consider his memory injured by it's being cherished in the breast of your wife."

Sir Edward, encouraged by this conversation, enquired where he might speak with Ethelinde? "I know not exactly," replied Mrs. Montgomery; "as after having given an hour this morning as usual to your children in her own room, she put on her hat, and told me she was going for her walk, as the day promised to be uncommonly fine. I was pleased to see her look more chearful than she usually does, but I made no enquiry as to the course of her walk. It usually, as you well know, is towards the seat on the rock, and there it is very probable you may find her.

Thither, with a palpitating heart, Sir Edward bent his steps; he found Ethelinde sitting in the cave, where she had of late passed so many hours. A book lay before her on the oak table, and a few flowers, the earliest of the year, were scattered round it: the notes of the birds that towards the end of March begin their first songs, and the lulling murmur of the torrent now

just gurgling down the rock, had soothed her mind into a state of soft and pensive melancholy. The approach of Sir Edward awakened her from it, not without adding some degree of apprehension to her surprise, for he had never joined her there before: she now knew not of his return to the abbey; and perturbation, hurry, and uneasiness, expressed on his countenance, could not have escaped a less interested observer.

When he spoke to her, the idea that something unusual had happened to him, or that some particular uneasiness pressed upon him, was more forcibly renewed. She waited a few moments in expectation of his telling her what had occasioned the trouble she observed; but as he briefly answered every question she asked him on the subjects which she knew had engaged his time and attention in town, and that he even seemed to have settled his sister's affairs better than, at his departure, he expected, she at length said—"Are you not well, my dear Sir, or has any thing occurred to give you unusual pain?"

"My pain," answered he, "is not unusual, Ethelinde; but it is at length become
 . . . insup-

insupportable. *You* see it without pity, but *I* can sustain it no longer. Determine, therefore, to be mine, or to see him who has so long adored you fly from you merely to hide from your sight the consequences of that anguish which you refuse to remove."

More alarmed than surprised at the vehemence of his manner and the purport of his words, Ethelinde tried to collect courage enough to speak; but before she could acquire it, Sir Edward went on—

"You know how ardently I loved you even when there were between us barriers that appeared insurmountable; when I was united to another; when your heart was solely occupied by that fortunate young man, whose fate I must ever contemplate with envy; you know that then I never offended you by a declaration of sentiments which it would have been as improper for you to listen to as fruitless for me to avow; you know, or you ought to know, all my silence cost me—all that I suffered—when every hour gave me occasion to contemplate perfections which I thought could never be mine; yet so entirely did I love you even then, that had the

happy Montgomery lived, I should have supported life by contemplating your felicity, and have been, however internally wretched, resigned; but now, that destiny itself has broken that union, shall I, with equal resignation, see you wearing out, in fruitless grief, that life which alone can give value to mine, and sacrificing your youth, your health, your talents, your virtues, to a vain, a chimerical idea of attachment to him who is no more! Have you for me neither pity or esteem? have you no wish to restore me to peace? to render my future days as happy as those you have hitherto seen me pass have been miserable? Have not my children, those lovely unfortunate little ones, a claim upon you to give them a yet stronger title to your affection, and to restore to them a mother who truly feels more real tenderness for them than she had who gave them birth? Have the wishes of your venerable, your beloved Mrs. Montgomery no influence? who declares that she shall leave the world without regret, if you, the sole remaining object of her solicitude, are no longer exposed to the dangers which surround youth, beauty, and sensibility like
your's.

your's. Alas! if these motives have no power to awaken your tenderness, can I hope that the misery of your friend will excite your pity. You have seen me in lingering tortures for weeks, for months; you would continue to see me still in them, if I had not determined that this shall be the period in which my fate shall be decided. Give me then hopes that you will be less inflexible, or let me, while I have yet strength to remove myself from you, bid you adieu for ever."

"Sir Edward," replied Ethelinde, after a short but expressive pause, "I am not, I hope, either insensible of your merit or ungrateful for all your goodness to me. If gratitude, if affection, if esteem, if the tenderest solicitude for your happiness, were enough to make you happy, I should think that I ought to sacrifice my reluctance to marry, and to give you my hand; but if I may judge of your sentiments, they are so delicate, that you would be unhappy unless your wife could repay them with her whole heart. The tenderest affections of mine are buried in the grave of Montgomery. Every hour in its passage convinces me that it will be ever impossible for me to recall them

to any other object. Should I then, in justice to you, Sir Edward, undertake engagements which it will not be in my power to fulfill? shall I at the altar promise to love you only, conscious as I am that great as is my esteem, my affection, my gratitude towards you, the image of Montgomery, lost as he is for ever, is as potent in my heart as if he really existed. I know that to the generality of men this would be considered as sentimental declamation, the effect of romantic enthusiasm; but it is not from Sir Edward Newenden I fear to excite ridicule on such a topic; you have an heart to which I dare to appeal for my sincerity when I say that my attachment to Montgomery is so interwoven with my existence, that it never can end but with life; in conquering it, if to conquer it were possible, I should become contemptible in my own eyes and certainly should gain nothing in your's."

Sir Edward heard her in silence, with clasped hands, and eyes fixed with mournful earnestness on her face. He seemed afraid of breathing, lest he should interrupt discourse which yet wounded him to the soul.

"Let us, therefore, my dear Sir Edward,"
continued

continued she, "let us think no more of a measure which would assuredly not make you happy, because it would render me miserable. Deprive me not of the only pleasures I can now enjoy—those of weeping at liberty without a breach of duty, and of remaining the most attached and grateful of your friends."

"Grateful!" exclaimed Sir Edward, his voice trembling in his throat, "grateful, Ethelinde, for what? for paltry pecuniary assistance, too contemptible for you to recollect; and such as I should have rejoiced in having the power to administer to a daughter of any man of honor, my friend, even though that friend had not been Colonel Chesterville, even though that daughter had been as destitute of attractions as you are attractive. But why do I prolong a conversation which is, I see, painful to you? You have decided, and I must submit. My presence is uneasy to you, since you can feel only concern in seeing me wretched. I go therefore and——"

He arose, and would have left the place abruptly, with wildness and agitation of manner that terrified Ethelinde: she caught his hand, and cried in a voice that expressed how

much she was affected—"Sir Edward, my dear Sir Edward——"

"Dear!" answered he, endeavouring gently to disengage himself—"Am I dear to you, Ethelinde, and *can* you condemn me to perpetual misery? Oh! embitter not your cruelty by dissimulated kindness; preserve at least your sincerity. If I were *indeed* dear to you could you——"

"Hear me, Sir Edward.—I have, in being very ingenuous with you, done what I think my sincerity as well as your esteem for me demands. Good God! is it to *you* I should use dissimulation? Surely no! I have told you that in giving my hand to any other man than Montgomery, whatever may be his merit, I shall be unhappy. I feel that time will with me fail of it's usual effect, and that years will pass away without diminishing the regret with which the loss of Montgomery will recur to me. What would be your uneasiness to see this—to be every day sensible, that though I stifled my sentiments, I still felt them in all their force; to see the slow, but certainly destructive hand of sorrow, preying on an heart which you would suppose ought to be yours
only,

only, and my health declining, perhaps my temper injured, by the restraint I should think myself obliged to impose, when, as your wife, I might ineffectually try, if not to obliterate at least to weaken the powerful and corrosive recollection of those days when I had hopes of being the wife of Montgomery. How many amiable and deserving women are there to whom——”

“ Stop, Ethelinde,” said Sir Edward. “ I have heard you hitherto with calmness; but I cannot continue to do so, when you speak of the possibility of my transferring to another that heart which has so long been your’s. Believe me, my attachment to you, hopeless as you determine it shall be, is as unchangeable as your own to Montgomery. If you were a better judge of your own attractions, you would know that he who has so long had an opportunity of studying, with a disposition to understand and admire those perfections, can feel little inclination to follow the advice which you seem disposed to offer. Your happiness, and not my own, has been, shall still be the first and fondest object of my wishes. I have often said, and I hope with

sincerity, that had Montgomery lived to have become, in being your husband, the most enviable of human beings, I could have witnessed his felicity, not perhaps without envy, but at least without any of those malignant sentiments which usually accompany that passion; since Providence has taken him from us, I have, fatally for myself, indulged those hopes which I before made it a point of honor to suppress: but since you say your happiness is inconsistent with mine, let *me* alone suffer for having yielded to those hopes; let me again study the hard lesson of silent suffering, again try what absence will do—ah! painful, fruitless, hopeless experiment!”

Again he would have turned away; but Ethelinde, more deeply affected, said—“No, Sir Edward, you shall not go: stay, I beseech you, and let me be still your ward, your sister, your friend! So you generously say you should have considered me had Montgomery lived: by an effort of virtuous resolution then, to which your noble spirit is more than equal, learn to think of him as still living.”

“Rather behold him really so!” cried a voice which struck motionless its auditors.

Ethelinde

Ethelinde, uttering a faint shriek, held by the arm of Sir Edward in amazement, while he, with equal surprise, beheld a man, who rushing from a thicket which grew near their seat, threw himself on his knees before her, and eagerly seizing her hands, pressed them to his forehead and his eyes in frantic rapture, crying—“Behold, my Ethelinde, behold that Montgomery so fondly regretted—so faithfully beloved!—he, who has been betrayed by the most tormenting jealousy into an action unworthy of him, and has listened to that discourse which has convinced him he has wronged you, and the worthiest of friends and of men. Look not, my angel, so terrified; but speak to me, I conjure you.”

Ethelinde, however, was unable to speak, and Sir Edward with difficulty prevented her falling. Distressed at the condition he saw her in, he said, not without some appearance of displeasure—“Why would you, Sir, be thus rash? why thus abruptly appear before her?”

“Pardon, dear Sir Edward,” replied the half frantic Montgomery—“pardon the transports of a man, who believing he had

lost every thing, finds himself still possess of Ethelinde's love, and of such a friend as you are. She is mine," continued he, straining her to his bosom—"she is mine! Believing me dead, she loved me still! I come, shipwrecked and a beggar, to my country; but am richer than fortune could have made me, in the possession of that dear, dear heart! Heaven give me strength to bear such excess of happiness!—forgive my precipitancy, and speak to me, my Ethelinde; 'tis Montgomery! your long lost Montgomery, whose arms enfold you!"

"Montgomery!" sighed Ethelinde. "Good God!"

The sudden surprise seemed for a moment to have deprived her of her senses. Sir Edward saw with concern that she could not recover herself. He feared she would faint—"You will destroy her if you are not more calm," said he. "Surely it was very ill-judged thus to surprise her."

"Again, dear Sir Edward!" answered he—"again I beg your pardon. I came under such depression that my reason fails under the intoxicating influence of joy. But I will be calm;

calm; speak to me, Ethelinde, and I will try to be calm."

"Montgomery, ever dear Montgomery!" repeated Ethelinde. She gave him her cold hand; but could articulate no more, nor shed a tear, though, from her deep and broken sighs, her heart seemed bursting.

"Let us go," said Sir Edward, "to my house; and do you, my dear Ethelinde, endeavour to recollect yourself."

"I will," replied she faintly, "indeed I will! Poor Montgomery!—is it possible?"

"Poor indeed!" cried he—"poor in every thing but love! This garb, this altered countenance, may tell you that Montgomery is changed in every respect but in his heart."

He was going on; but Sir Edward besought him not to talk to her till they got to the abbey,—“You see,” said he, “how much she is still affected. Lean upon me, Ethelinde, and let Montgomery support you on the other side.”

She obeyed; and while they slowly led her along, Montgomery continued to utter disjointed sentences, expressive of the tumultuous transports of his soul; while, her eyes continually

lost every thing, finds himself seemed still Ethelinde's love, and of such as was real. On are. She is mine," con' Ethelinde, relieved her to his bosom—"she composed; and the me dead, she loved, which had so much wrecked and a be'd, having in a great degree am richer than for her with Montgomery, and in the possessi' dy to compose a mind hardly Heaven give an his had been, though from a of happiness cause.

speak to he had been indulging of call- mery! woman he adored, were vanished arms e A dreadful pang attended this con- " but his generous and disinterested God prevailed, after a short but severe strug- to over all considerations that merely af- fected himself. Determined to find his fel- erty in that of those he loved, he rejoiced in the restoration of a beloved son to a tender mother, a valuable man to his country, and felicity to Ethelinde. After a short absence, he returned with apparent serenity to the room where he had left her with Montgomery; and taking her hand, he said, with an half mourn- ful and forced smile—"Well, my dear Ethy, if you have now forgiven your wanderer for his

his abrupt appearance, would it not be well to consider how we shall introduce him to his mother, for whom, in her present languid state, I should apprehend very ill consequences from the effect of such surprise as his appearance to-day gave you."

"We have been trying to talk of it," replied Montgomery; "but do you, dear Sir Edward, who are so much more capable, determine for us."

"And soon, Sir Edward," said Ethelinde; "for it is already past the usual hour of my return, and I fear Mrs. Montgomery may be alarmed."

"Do you find yourself," answered he, "equal to the meeting, or rather are you able to conceal what you know?"

"I am afraid not; but I will at least attempt it. I carried for many weeks, in my agonized bosom, the fatal secret of his supposed death: I will try if, for a few hours, for longer it will be impossible, I can conceal the transporting certainty of his life."

Montgomery, tenderly solicitous for his mother, and greatly distressed by the account Ethelinde had given him of the state of her health,

health, was ready to submit himself wholly to the guidance of Sir Edward; and it was determined that he should carry Ethelinde home in his post chaise; saying only that she had walked farther than usual, and being tired, had called at the abbey to be conveyed home by that means to the cottage; that he should stay there with her himself, and in conversation gradually open to her, first the possibility, and afterwards the assurance that her son was living, who, when Sir Edward thought her sufficiently prepared, was, at a signal agreed upon, to appear.

This being settled, Sir Edward and Ethelinde departed together. They hardly spoke the whole way: Sir Edward silently revolved the events of the day, and meditated how he might best acquit himself to his own satisfaction, and with the least risk to the feeble frame of Mrs. Montgomery; while Ethelinde, overwhelmed as she was with the sense of her own unexpected happiness, felt her admiration of his greatness of mind mingled with pain, from the certainty of how much it cost him. As they approached the house, the recollection of all she owed him, from her father's

ther's

ther's first embarrassments till the present moment, pressed on her mind; and almost involuntarily he lifted his hand to her lips: a tear fell upon his hand; he kissed it off, sighed deeply, but said nothing till the chaise stopped at the door, when in a voice that he meant should be firmer than it was, he desired her to try to compose her countenance that Mrs. Montgomery might have no cause to suspect she had met with any extraordinary occurrence.

CHAP.

health, was ready to submit to the guidance of Sir Edward, and he determined that he should

XIV.

in his post chaise; he walked farther than he had called at the

Ethelinde easily acceded by that means to the wishes of Montgomery for their stay; she stayed there with a view to find a more gradual approach to the task Sir Edward had undertaken, and after she had hastened away as soon after dinner as she could; while he entertained Mrs. Montgomery for some time on indifferent subjects. She soon, however, as a pause in the conversation gave her leave, she enquired, with that appearance of tender interest which she always felt on the subject of Ethelinde, whether he believed that she should, before she died, be made easy by leaving her his wife. "I have a letter to-day," said she, "from my brother, and I am glad to find that though Lady Hawkhurst followed him with her family to Bath, the marriage she so artfully meditated has wholly failed. It is difficult to sustain long an assumed character, and Bath was of all others the place where it was to Lady Arabella the most difficult. My brother

ther fortunately discovered her true one, and is thankful that he discovered it before he had engaged himself in irremediable wretchedness. Chesterville and Victorine have seen the danger, and I hope profited by it, as he mentions being well satisfied with their conduct. This on his account is most satisfactory to me; yet, my dear Sir Edward, it has lessened but little my anxiety in regard to this adopted daughter of my heart. Chesterville can never be the friend, the brother *she* deserves, for his heart is incapable of it. If she goes to reside with them, she will not complain, but she will undoubtedly be unhappy. Naturally of a pensive turn, and her heart cruelly wounded by an irreparable loss, *their* style of life will be painful to her; and her melancholy, all soft and interesting as it is, will ever be a restraint upon them; besides that my brother's partial fondness for her, will be but too likely to excite discontent in his daughter and her husband. Whither then can she go? and what will be her destiny?"

"I believe," said Sir Edward, collecting all his fortitude, "that the generous interest you
take

take in my favour, added to her friendship for me, would make some change in her resolution, if she had not of late taken up a notion that he whom she regrets as dead may yet be living. I could not combat an idea on which she dwelt with so much fondness: she brought indeed numberless instances to confirm its probability; and certainly it is not impossible."

Convinced as Sir Edward had been after the most assiduous enquiries that Montgomery had really perished by shipwreck at the Mauritius, he had never before encouraged the unhappy mother to dwell on a possibility that could, he thought, answer no other purpose than to lengthen or renew her sufferings. She now turned on him those eyes that had long ceased to look towards any object in this world with hope or pleasure. They seemed as if they would penetrate his inmost thoughts.—“What do you mean, Sir Edward,” said she, in a solemn tone, “and why do you seem to encourage such wild—oh! God!—such hopeless imaginations.”

“Be calm,” replied he, “and I will tell you that a sailor has been seen in London
who

who was in the vessel in which Montgomery was supposed to be lost: and this man says that he believes it very likely your son escaped."

"Almighty God!" exclaimed she, starting from her chair. "*He is*—there then remains an hope. Where, and when can I see this man? Send for him, dear Sir Edward: or rather let me go in search of him that no time may be lost, for many days of suspense I shall not survive. Oh! merciful heaven, if it be thy pleasure," continued she, clasping her hands, "if it be thy pleasure to restore him to his widowed mother!" The idea seemed a moment to animate her whole frame, but then fear of a disappointment checked her transports.—"Oh! no, I dare not hope it. He is gone, he is lost for ever; for had he been living he would have been in England as soon as this mariner." She sat down and seemed gasping for breath. "My dear Madam," said Sir Edward, assuming a cheerful tone, "you are needlessly agitated. Consider that if the intelligence is groundless, it will make no real difference, because, believing the worst already, you can learn no
thing

thing more to fear, while it is possible, nay probable, that you have much to hope. For my own part I own I have very sanguine expectations, but I will not say a word of them till I see that you can hear me with more composure."

"Sanguine expectations, Sir Edward! you know then more than you have communicated. Sanguine expectations! tell me, I conjure you, from whence they arise?"

"Command yourself then, my dear good friend, and I will obey you. I *have seen* the sailor, who is positive that your son by swimming gained the shore. Can you hear the rest?"

Mrs. Montgomery bowed her head, but could not speak. "That rest is only a continuation of good tidings. The same person tells me that he not only has no doubt of your son's having escaped death, but that he is now in England, perhaps hastening to you!"

She held out her hand to Sir Edward in speechless transport; but he found her pulse sinking, her eyes closed, she fell lifeless in her chair. He rang in terror; the servants and Ethelinde ran to her assistance; and Montgo-

mery,

mery, who waited only at the corner of the house, was alarmed at the confusion he heard, and fearing that it was occasioned by his mother's indisposition, he rushed into the room, and was on his knees before her before either Sir Edward or Ethelinde had the power to restrain him.

For some moments they believed her dead; and the cruel alteration sickness and sorrow had made in her figure and countenance, confirmed Montgomery in this dreadful idea. He deplored, in accents of piercing distress, that he had arrived only to witness the last sighs of the best of parents. He now ran out for assistance; then remembering that no medical help could there be obtained, he flew back to the room, and walking about in an agony of grief and apprehension, was afraid of looking at his mother lest he should see her expire.

Feeble, languishing, and even in the last stage of a decline as Mrs. Montgomery seemed to be, she had yet more strength than her appearance indicated; the remedies Ethelinde administered had their effect, and in a few moments she was enough restored to be
sensible

sensible that her beloved Charles was not only living, but was actually embracing her knees, and shedding tears of the tenderest filial affection on the hands she put forth to bless him. The first emotion of her heart, after the return of her senses, was gratitude to the being who had preserved and restored him. After having silently but fervently offered up her thanks, she pressed her son fondly to her heart; and having taken some refreshment, reposed on a sofa; while her son, whom her eyes followed incessantly, seemed disposed to gratify the curiosity which the whole company must, he knew, feel to know the particulars of his life since his quitting England. Sir Edward Newenden, however, soon after Mrs. Montgomery was tolerably recovered, took his leave for the evening and returned home.

The altered looks of Montgomery, as well as his dress, which was that of a common sailor, gave his mother and Ethelinde painful impressions of all the sufferings and hardships he had undergone. With the tenderest expression of pity, love, and solicitude, the eyes of both seemed to ask a detail of his adventures.

tures.

tures. He saw that they would be relieved and gratified by hearing it, and thus began.

“ I will not describe to you the horrors of storms in the tropical regions, or attempt to give you an idea of that, which after many weeks of famine and fatigue, during which we were driven by a succession of hurricanes quite out of our course, threw the vessel I was in on a rock near the Isle of Bourbon. As it was evident she must soon go to pieces, those, who, aided by the desperation of their circumstances, found courage to brave the almost equal peril of the tremendous surf which broke on the shore, threw themselves into the water; I was among these; and trusting to my skill in swimming, and to my personal strength, I left the ship; and under the protection of Providence, found myself, though with some severe bruises, on shore on the island. I had plunged into the sea in the cloaths I had on, saving nothing of the property I had on board but my purse, in which was some money and two small diamonds, a little parcel of linen, and two miniatures I always wore about me. The people, however,

among whom I was, with five others, cast, were not inhospitable. By a ship going to India, three of my fellow sufferers returned thither. My hope was to get a passage to Europe. After ten tedious weeks, an American ship came into the port of St. Denys on her return to that country. America was comparatively near England, and I eagerly enquired for a passage; but the master, who was a species of animal I had never seen before, would not receive me without money, of which, though I had saved my purse, I had now very little left. I was obliged, therefore, to agree to work for my passage; and in that situation I arrived at Boston, after a long voyage, in which I suffered some fatigue and hardship, which I bore however without murmuring when I reflected that every league brought me nearer to the objects of all my solicitude; and at night, or whenever my watch was over, I kissed the two dear pictures I had preserved of my mother and my Ethelinde: their beloved images soothed my short slumbers, and I awoke indeed to new toil, but to toil lightened by the hope of soon embracing the beloved originals.

“ In

“ In about six weeks after I landed at Boston, where I with great difficulty subsisted, I got a passage for Ireland, but still as a common sailor; from thence I landed at Bristol; and as soon as I touched English ground, my anxiety to hear of you both became insupportable. I recollected the family of the Ludfords, and determined to apply to them, without however discovering how deeply interested I was in the intelligence I asked. They were at their house a few miles from the city; I walked thither, and approached the door in my jacket and trousers, which I own were not in very good order, my whole ambition being to have cleaner linen than is usually found under such habiliments, and I had been obliged to sell a ring and a small diamond I had in my purse, to furnish myself till this time with that indulgence and the necessaries of life. When I reached the door, I found a coach in readiness to take the ladies out. I was ordered by the laced footman of Mrs. Ludford to retire. “ What do you do here, fellow?” demanded the insolent domestic. “ We suffer no such people to come to the door.” I answered that I was just come

from India, where I had seen a friend of Mrs. Ludford's, and wished to be allowed to speak to her. The man, however, would have repulsed me with insult, if at that moment the lady of the house, leaning on the arm of a young woman, who appeared to be a kind of companion, had not appeared in all the unwieldy splendor of recent wealth, and self-created importance. I approached her with my hat in my hand, and in the humble phrase which seemed to become my condition, began to speak. She stopped, and turning to her footman, said—"What is the reason you do not obey my orders? Why are beggars suffered to come to this door?" I am no beggar, Madam, said I, smiling at the ridiculous air of dignity the lady assumed; but having lately arrived from India, I waited on you at the desire of Mr. Montgomery to enquire after Miss Chesterville. "I know nothing about her," replied she, passing by me, without deigning to look at me again; "but if you apply to the Newendens, I suppose you may learn more." The lady then seated herself in her coach, her companion followed her, and she was driven from the door.

"I now

“ I now ventured to ask the footman for intelligence of Miss Chesterville. The upper servants condescended not to hold converse with a person of my appearance, and shut the door in my face; but from an inferior female servant, who came to it soon afterwards, not yet arrived to the dignity of supreme insolence, I learned that Miss Clarinthia had married a young officer against the consent of her father, and was gone with him to join his regiment; and that Mr. Rupert had some time before departed from his paternal counting house to make the tour of Italy, from whence he sent such accounts of his parties with Princes and Princesses, such verses, and such curiosities, as reconciled his mother to his absence, though it much discomposed the old gentleman: that as to Miss Chesterville, she had left their family a long time before with a rich gentleman, whose name the girl could not remember, and that she had since been married to him or some other great Squire or Lord, as had been told in their kitchen. Astonished and alarmed by this intelligence, vague and disjointed as it was, I hastened from Ludford house to Bath, intend-

ing to proceed directly to London; but on my arrival there, I saw on the door of a splendid house in one of the new streets the name of Maltravers, and ventured to knock at it. There again my appearance had nearly precluded me from all intelligence; but after assuring the servant that I wanted nothing but some information that would give him no great trouble, he vouchsafed to tell me that the Mr. Maltravers I enquired after had been some time dead, and that the house I now saw belonged to his widow. I asked after Lady Newenden. Lady Newenden too was dead; and Sir Edward, said I; pray where is he? "Indeed," replied the footman, "I don't know. I don't think that my lady ever hears of him." I told him that it was very material to me to know where to find him; that I had letters also, and a message of consequence to deliver to Miss Chesterville, a niece of his Lady's, and that it would be doing me a great service if he would go up to his Lady to enquire where I might see either of them. Probably he delivered his message imperfectly; and the name of Sir Edward Newenden, united with that of Miss Chesterville, excited the malignant

malignant curiosity of the lady; for after a moment the footman came back and told me, that though his lady was engaged with company, she would see me herself. I followed the footman to the door of a room, where, though it was yet morning with them, a party were at cards. Mrs. Maltravers, whom I hardly recollected, and who did not know me, bade me approach; and turning half round, she said—"What do you know, friend, of Sir Edward Newenden and Miss Chesterville? My servant informs me you have something to say about them." I replied that the servant then had been mistaken, for that I merely took the liberty to beg a direction to either of them, having letters from India for them. "Is that all?" cried she, with visible ill humour; "and pray who directed you to me?" I answered that knowing the connection of the families, I had presumed—"Presumed indeed," replied the lady. "People are continually plaguing me for an address to Sir Edward Newenden, as if *I* had any knowledge of him. I assure you, young man, and all whom it may concern, that I am quite a stranger to Sir Edward

Newenden. The man hides himself, I believe, in the Hebrides, or under the North Pole; and then his former acquaintance are seized for his address."

"I humbly represented that I had letters to deliver from India to him and Miss Chesterville: to whom, perhaps, Madam, said I, you will be so good as to give me a direction, though you cannot to Sir Edward Newenden, "Oh! as to that," cried she, sneeringly, "I can as easily do one as the other; for undoubtedly they are together. Report says they are married. I know nothing of that; but however, friend, they have an establishment together, that is certain, so you will have only one trouble in delivering your letters; but do understand, and let it be generally understood, that I am wholly unconnected with Sir Edward Newenden. Here, John, shew this person out." I retired in greater uneasiness than I entered; every circumstance seemed to confirm my apprehensions, and in an increasing agony of suspense I reached the Devizes the same evening by means of a return chaise. There, however, I was compelled to stop for the night, as no conveyance

ance within reach of my slender finances was likely to offer till the next day.

“ At the inn where the chaise put me down, I observed a phaeton with arms on it, which being somewhat remarkable, I remembered to be those of Davenant. On enquiry, I heard that the carriage belonged to him; the waiters told me he had lived there almost a month. I sought his servants; but they had not been long with him, and knew not even the names of those for whom I was so painfully anxious. I determined therefore to address myself to their master. This, however, was not very easy; for I discovered that Davenant, by excessive drinking, dissolute connections, and low company, had greatly impaired his fortune, and was now so apprehensive of his creditors, that he was unwilling to hold converse with strangers. By means, however, of his servants, whom I treated at the expence of almost half the money I had left, the *lady* who lived with Davenant was prevailed upon to direct that I might be admitted. It was near nine o'clock in the evening before I obtained this favour: but Mr. Davenant had not risen from his dinner table, which was co-

vered with wine and bowls of punch, and surrounded by an exciseman, a feeder of fighting cocks, a celebrated bruiser, and the woman who was his present favourite.

“ The bloated figure and inflamed countenance of Davenant excited my compassion. He seemed, however, not to have the least recollection of me ; but with half shut eyes, and a voice rendered almost inarticulate by intoxication, he accosted me by the name of honest Jack, I suppose from my sailor’s dress, and in coarse phrase asked what I wanted with him. I told him that I came lately from India, and being entrusted with letters of consequence to Sir Edward Newenden, which I wished to deliver myself, I took the liberty of desiring a direction to his present residence. “ And how the devil,” said he, “ d’ye think I know any thing of such a parson in a coloured coat, as that queer old guardian of mine. Faith, friend, I don’t keep such company. You may enquire about him of the next methodist preacher, who is much more likely to know than I am where to find him.” It would be disgusting to repeat the oaths with which this unfortunate being interlarded
all

all the intelligence I could gain from him, which was, that he had heard that Sir Edward lived entirely at Grafmere, and that you, my Ethelinde, resided with him. "Some say," added he, "they are married, and I hope they are, with all my soul, because I know what a devilish jilt the girl is, and the starched knight will stand a good chance of being served by his second as he was by his first wife. Rat me if I should not be cursed glad to hear it." I turned from the profligate idiot with disgust, but all my uneasiness was redoubled. I hardly doubted any longer of Ethelinde's marriage, and to the night I passed in consequence of this persuasion, that which threw me desolate and shipwrecked on the Isle of Bourbon was comparatively happy. Sleep was no longer in question. On the top of one of the night stages I proceeded to London. I hurried to the town house of Sir Edward Newenden. He had left it only the preceding morning to return to Grafmere. I questioned the maid who had the charge of it, and her answers served only to persuade me that all I apprehended was certain, that Ethelinde was married, and that I was undone.

I cannot

I cannot if I would describe the state of mind in which I now proceeded to the north. My money was so nearly expended, that I was obliged sometimes to walk, at others to procure a conveyance for a few miles in some chance carriage ; and thus I was, notwithstanding the impatience which devoured me, six days in performing a journey, which had I had money I should have made in two. Last night about eight o'clock I arrived on the borders of the lake ; the moon was trembling on it's clear surface ; and from among floating clouds her rays fell on the white chimneys of my mother's cottage. Good God ! what were my feelings when I first beheld them ? I dared not enter ; for I felt that the absolute certainty of Ethelinde's marriage I was utterly unable to sustain. Hardly knowing what I did, and afraid to enquire of myself what I meant to do, if I was really as wretched as my fears represented me to be, I traversed those well known paths that led to the cottage with undescrivable terror ; now hastening as if determined to know the worst, now stopping for breath, and to recover that resolution which seemed every moment on the
point

point of giving me up to the phrenzy of despair. I threw my eyes wildly round me, and remembering the spots where we had first met, all my agonies were redoubled. There I cried I, turning my eyes towards the creek, there I snatched *her* from death, she who now lives for another! As I did this, I saw distant lights through the trees, and the abbey seemed to have candles in every window. Good God! said I, there she is! no longer my Ethelinde, but the bride of Sir Edward Newenden; there, surrounded by splendor and elegance, she drives from her heart forever the memory of the indigent, unhappy wanderer, who had nothing to give her but an heart; and *you* my mother! could *you* suffer this? but you perhaps were not consulted; sinking under concern and regret, your feeble remonstrances were unheard or unregarded when ambition and interest solicited. "Oh! forgive me, dearest Ethelinde," continued he, "forgive me that I thought thus of you. Be not thus affected, my angel; I cannot bear your tears."

Ethelinde, smiling through them, promised to be more composed, and Montgomery,

kissing

kissing her hands, and then those of his mother, proceeded—

“ The night grew cold and stormy; and the moon was no longer visible; when I reached the court of the cottage, about half past ten o’clock, every thing was silent round it; I opened the little gate as softly as I could, and a thousand tender recollections crowded on my mind. I trembled, and was obliged to lean against it a moment for breath, when the old pointer, of which I had been so fond from a boy, ran out to me, and instead of barking, as is his custom to strangers, jumped up and licked my hands. *You have not forgotten me, Vigo,* said I: and I know not why, but I burst into tears. My heart seemed relieved. I was able to consider what I should do for the night; and thinking that my sudden appearance at such an hour might too much alarm my mother, I determined to seek a lodging in some of the out houses. I easily found one filled with straw, where I lay down, and my faithful dog remained by me. I had often slept sound in a much worse lodging; but now to sleep was impossible, notwithstanding

ing

ing the great fatigue I had undergone for several preceding days.

“ Before day break, I left my straw, and went into the village, as well for food as to ask questions which I trembled to have answered. The people of the small ale house, which supplied me with a coarse breakfast, had no recollection of me in this dress, and answered my enquiries as those of a stranger, who, travelling into Scotland to his friends, had missed his way. The woman, who was not unwilling to talk, gave me the history of her good master, as she called Sir Edward Newenden, and told me how he had been vilely used by his first lady, who, as good luck would have it, died in parts beyond sea, and now how he was going to be married out of hand to a sweet pretty lady as lived in their village, one Miss Chesterville. Going to be married, cried I, with emotion which would have betrayed me to any more observing person, are they *not* married then?” She replied that it was the general opinion of the neighbourhood that they were, though for some reason or other it had been kept a secret. “ To be sure, for my part,” said she, “ as I

says

says to my husband, I think how they *be* married; for there, Miss, she have had ever so long the care of his honor's children, and is as fond on 'em as if they were her own; and Master himself lives as t'were at Madam Montgomery's." This account rather corroborated than diminished my fears; and finding my soul sicken under their influence, I could not collect strength to have them confirmed; but abruptly quitting my talkative landlady, I wandered away through the woody paths of the north fell, again to consider what I should do. As I sat on the roots of the old thorns and hollies of the rock that hang over the foot way leading from the abbey, I heard voices swell in the breeze, and looking down thro' the yet leafless branches, I saw Sir Edward Newenden followed by two of his servants with something in their hands. He seemed to be giving them directions. I thought, though I could not see his face, that he had, in his air and manner, all the alertness of hope, if not of happiness, and at that moment I felt disposed to rush upon him and stab him to the heart.

“ This gloomy and dreadful idea yet possessed

ferred my mind after I lost sight of him, whom I considered as the destroyer of all my happiness; but then the recollection of my mother, the cruelty I should be guilty of towards her, towards that tender and dear parent who had lived but for me, came fortunately to soften the fury with which I was inspired, and again I wept like a woman.

“ Thus between stupor and phrenzy, which I cannot describe, I passed above an hour; and then, without having come to any resolution, I went up towards the cave where I first told my Ethelinde of my love, and where I used to sit whole hours to think of, or write to her. What were my emotions when I saw her there; lovely indeed as ever, but paler and thinner than I had left her: she had a book in her hand, but she seemed rather to meditate than read. I was within a few yards of her, hidden by the thick brush-wood that grew round the foot of the rock. I heard her sigh; I fancied that she repeated the name of Montgomery, and I was on the point of rushing out of my concealment to know my destiny, perhaps to die at her feet, when the appearance of Sir Edward Newenden drove me

back

back to my covert in an agony of such terrible suspense as I cannot even now recollect without shuddering."

Montgomery concluded his narrative by describing the sensations he felt while he listened to the dialogue between Ethelinde and Sir Edward; again he apologized to her for the imprudence of his abrupt appearance; "but who," added he, tenderly embracing her, "ah who that had feared, so justly feared that he was undone, and found himself at once the happiest of mankind, could have borne such transcendent felicity with a more equal mind?"

It was now time to separate for the night. Montgomery, whose reflection returned, was anxious that neither his mother or Ethelinde, who had suffered so much agitation during the day, should be fatigued by sitting up late. Mrs. Montgomery kissed her son; a silent tear spoke how much she was affected with those emotions to which words cannot do justice, when beneath her own roof, in health and safety, she bade good night to the darling of her heart.

Early

Early the next morning Ethelinde received from Sir Edward Newenden the following letter—

“ Let me, dearest Miss Chesterville, again congratulate you and Mrs. Montgomery on the events of yesterday—I do most sincerely; but mine is one of those situations where to fly for a short time from those whom I most sincerely love, is perhaps best on their account and certainly so on my own.

“ I go, therefore, to-morrow morning, before you can receive this, towards London with my eldest boy; and from thence, in a very few days (which will be employed in visiting Mrs. Woolaston, and settling my pecuniary concerns) to Dover, where I shall embark for France, and go immediately to Geneva: there it is my present purpose to continue twelve or fourteen months.

“ Within less than as many days I conclude you will give your hand to the only man who entirely deserves such a blessing. You will continue, I know, to honor me with that sisterly affection that has hitherto been at once a pleasure and a torment to me. I will
endeavour

endeavour henceforth to learn the art of making it only the former; and I beg of you and your dear Montgomery to forgive, to pity, and, if possible, to *forget* my weakness. Before I return to England, I will learn to conquer it wholly, and will not present myself to my sister till I am worthy of being called her brother.

“In leaving my two little ones to your care, I know that they are in the hands of the best and tenderest of friends. If you remove to London take them with you—you will love them, for your heart is formed for love. They are amiable—they are motherless—they are mine! Any of those circumstances would recommend them to your compassionate bosom—all those circumstances united secure for them the protection and tenderness of Ethelinde and Montgomery.

“Assure my respectable, and now most happy friend, of my true regard; and now, loveliest, dearest, best of women, adieu! May the blessing of heaven be upon you. Remember, and I know Montgomery will remind you of it, remember to write to the most faithful of your friends, E. NEWENDEN.”

Ethelinde

Ethelinde shed tears over this letter ; and when Montgomery went to call her for an early walk, he found her still weeping. His gallant heart sympathized in her sorrow : he would have gone instantly to the abbey to have attempted detaining in England a friend so justly dear to them both ; but Ethelinde informed him that the servant who brought the letter, and to whom she had spoken, had assured her that his master, who had not been in bed all night, had departed before day break for London with his eldest boy.

Ethelinde and Montgomery went, however, instantly to the abbey to fetch the two younger children ; and in giving to them attention truly maternal, she found the only alleviation of that concern, which, in despite of the happiness she enjoyed, she could not help feeling for the sufferings inflicted by hopeless love on one of the noblest hearts in the world.

Mrs. Montgomery felt the effect of the painfully delightful scene she had gone thro' more afterwards than she had done the evening it happened. The languor of which she was sensible, made her again believe her death not very distant, and she desired to have her

son and Ethelinde united, and then she said she should leave the world without one wish unfulfilled.

Her's and Montgomery's importunities left Ethelinde no excuse to delay her marriage, and within a week after Montgomery's return, she gave him her hand at the village church, only Mrs. Montgomery, Mrs. Dickenson, the housekeeper at Grasmere Abbey, and two other servants, being present.

Their marriage made no alteration in their simple domestic arrangement. The happy Montgomery would have thought himself in a state of felicity too great for humanity, had not fears for his mother's health sometimes made him remember how easily it might be diminished. As the summer advanced, however, Mrs. Montgomery, whose heart was relieved of all those cares which had so greatly hurt her health, grew much better; and towards autumn, her son, who dreaded a relapse if she continued in the north during the winter, prevailed on her to go to Bristol for those months. Thither he accompanied her with Ethelinde and the two little Newendens.

There they saw Lord Danesforte; who, after
every

every other expedient to retrieve a ruined constitution, came thither to die. He appeared to be a walking skeleton; but was still surrounded with persons whose business it was to keep off the approaches of reflection and remorse, if they could not retard those of death. He was persuaded to the last moment that he should recover; and much as he deserved to suffer, Ethelinde could not hear of his decease, which soon happened, without being greatly shocked, and reflecting with a mixture of pity and horror on all the misery he had brought, not only on the family of Sir Edward Newenden, but on those of many other persons, though he now unrepentingly was gone where all his crimes were registered.

Mr. Harcourt came to his sister at Bristol, and added to her happiness. His health was much amended; his daughter was no longer careless of his ease, or ungrateful for his tenderness; and Chesterville himself, who, with Victorine, passed a month with them at Bristol, was much changed in consequence of the alarm which Mr. Harcourt's proposed marriage had given him. He was still rather too much a man of the great world, but Ethelinde

linde loved him, and overlooked his faults, because she wished neither to remember or discover them. He had now two children, and seemed really to consider the necessity of providing for them as well as pleasing himself, out of the ample income paid him by Mr. Harcourt.

Whatever were his real feelings as to the generosity of his father-in-law towards Montgomery and his sister, he carefully concealed them, and even affected pleasure at the presents he made to them and Mrs. Montgomery. Montgomery, however, always the most generous and disinterested of men, would absolutely accept of no more money than Mr. Harcourt had already settled on himself and his mother. "It is enough, my dear uncle," said he, "for all my wants, and all my wishes, for neither Ethelinde or I have any intention to quit the dear though humble abode on the banks of Grasmere Water, where we have found happiness, and where we enjoy

"That blest seclusion from a jarring world,"

which, young as we both are, we have both learned to covet. We shall be rich there
with

with what your generosity has already done for us. It would only give us pain to deprive of more, those who have a right to all your fortune. Come in the course of the summer, my dear Sir, come and see if we can be happier than the bounty of Providence and your bounty has already made us."

The happiness enjoyed by Mrs. Montgomery, whose health was completely re-established, and by her son and daughter, was such as admitted indeed of no addition but what it received by the birth of a daughter, in whose infant features Montgomery delighted to trace the mingled resemblance of his mother and her own; and by the arrival of Sir Edward Newenden, who, after an absence of something more than twelve months, returned to Grasmere, with his heart as partial as ever to his charming friend, but divested of all the painful sensations which had formerly attended that partiality. He employed himself between the duty he owed his country, and the education of his children, fondly fancying that the time might come when his eldest boy, whose life Ethelinde had once been, under heaven, the means of saving,

might become the fortunate husband of the infant cherub whom he saw at her breast. Thus in present content, and with hope of future happiness, the life of this amiable man was restored to serenity, and those days which he passed at Grasmere were always the happiest of the year. Montgomery and Ethelinde, delighted to see that sorrow no longer corroded the heart of him to whom they owed so many obligations, were, as well as Mrs. Montgomery, grateful to Providence for the unmixed blessings they thus enjoyed, and endeavoured to deserve by the practice of every virtue, the continuation of felicity so seldom tasted on earth.

